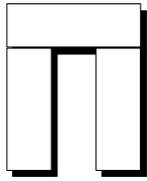


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Stonehenge Visitor Centre Countess East:  
Further Archaeological Evaluation, Report No. 54700.01  
(Wessex Archaeology, February 2004)



# Stonehenge Visitor Centre, Countess East, Amesbury, Wiltshire

Further Archaeological Evaluation

*Wessex Archaeology*

Ref: 54700.01a

*February 2004*

# **STONEHENGE VISITOR CENTRE COUNTESS EAST, AMESBURY, WILTSHIRE**

## **Further Archaeological Evaluation**

**Prepared on behalf of**

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Report Reference: 54700.01a

**February 2004**

**STONEHENGE VISITOR CENTRE, COUNTESS EAST,  
AMESBURY, WILTSHIRE**

**Further Archaeological Evaluation**

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# STONEHENGE VISITOR CENTRE, COUNTESS EAST, AMESBURY, WILTSHIRE

## Further Archaeological Evaluation

### Summary

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by English Heritage to undertake further archaeological evaluation of land at Countess East, Amesbury, centred on National Grid Reference 415550 142400. The Site is proposed for development to provide a new Stonehenge Visitor Centre with associated car parking, access and landscaping.

Previous archaeological evaluation of the Site identified an area of high archaeological potential extending to some 6.5 ha, within which a pit of probable Neolithic date, a masonry building of possible Romano-British date, four Anglo-Saxon sunken-featured buildings and a number of undated pits and postholes were found. Following consultation with the County Archaeologist, further evaluation of proposed car park and screen planting areas in the southern half of the Site (Areas B and C) was undertaken between 12<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup> January 2004 in order to inform further design of these elements of the scheme.

The further evaluation comprised the excavation of an additional 13 trial trenches (Trenches 83-95) in Areas B and C. The only features recorded were a short ditch and a substantial assemblage of worked flint in Trench 83, and a sunken featured building (SFB) of Anglo-Saxon date in Trench 85, both in Area C.

The flint assemblage from Trench 83 comprises some 1,500 pieces, the bulk of which are derived from the production of core tools, such as Neolithic hand axes or knives, or possibly Early Bronze Age flint daggers. The mint condition of the material and its association with a feature suggests that it represents evidence of *in situ*, or near-*in situ* manufacture; evidence of tool manufacture such as this is unprecedented within the Stonehenge environs and is potentially of at least regional significance.

The SFB is situated close to one of the examples found in the previous trenching. The absence of archaeological features in Area B suggests that the Anglo-Saxon settlement, although extensive, is topographically confined to the low river terrace identified previously between 71 and 74.5 m OD. No evidence for post-built structures likely to have served as dwellings, nor any evidence for burials, was found. The settlement evidence may be regarded as of at least regional importance.

Construction of the proposed car park in Area B will not affect any known archaeological features or deposits. The line of the proposed access route in Area C coincides with the Anglo-Saxon SFB; the access route is to be constructed entirely above existing levels to avoid damage to archaeology. The proposed woodland character planting in Area C would adversely affect the survival of the prehistoric ditch and associated flint scatter in Trench 83.

**STONEHENGE VISITOR CENTRE, COUNTESS EAST,  
AMESBURY, WILTSHIRE**

**Further Archaeological Evaluation**

**Acknowledgements**

The evaluation was commissioned by English Heritage and Wessex Archaeology would like to thank John Maloney for his assistance. Roy Canham of Wiltshire County Council monitored the fieldwork and his help and guidance during the course of the project is gratefully acknowledged.

The project was managed for Wessex Archaeology by Chris Moore and Andy Manning. The fieldwork was directed by Jamie Wright, with the assistance of Barry Henessy, Steve Beach, Nick Plunckett and Pete Fairclough. This report was prepared by Jamie Wright and Chris Moore, with the assistance of Lorraine Mephram, Phil Harding and Stephanie Knight (finds), and Michael J. Allen, Chris Stevens, Sarah Wyles and Louise Munns (environmental remains). The figures were produced by Marie Leverett.

# STONEHENGE VISITOR CENTRE, COUNTESS EAST, AMESBURY, WILTSHIRE

## Further Archaeological Evaluation

### 1 INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Project background

- 1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by English Heritage to undertake further archaeological evaluation of land at Countess East, Amesbury, hereafter referred to as ‘the Site’. The Site extends to approximately 21.4 ha, situated to the north-east of the Countess Roundabout on the northern edge of Amesbury, centred on National Grid Reference 415550 142400.
- 1.1.2 The Site is proposed for development to provide a new Stonehenge Visitor Centre with associated car parking, access roads and landscaping. The new visitor centre will be linked to Stonehenge and the World Heritage Site (WHS) via a light transit system
- 1.1.3 Previous archaeological evaluation of the Site (Wessex Archaeology 2003a) identified two distinct areas of archaeological activity. A small number of prehistoric features was found in the northern half of the Site. In the southern half of the Site, an area of high archaeological potential extending to some 6.5 ha was identified. Within this area a pit of probable Neolithic date, a masonry building of possible Romano-British date, four Anglo-Saxon sunken-featured buildings and a number of undated pits and postholes were found. Subsequent geophysical survey (Stratascan 2003) did not provide any useful information regarding the extent of this area of potential, or the nature of remains within it.
- 1.1.4 The area of high archaeological potential in the southern half of the Site would be crossed by the proposed access roads into the site, and is bordered by areas proposed for a car park and screen planting. Following consultation with the County Archaeologist, further evaluation of the proposed car park and screen planting areas was undertaken (**Figure 1**, Areas B and C) in order to inform further design of these elements of the scheme.
- 1.1.5 The further evaluation comprised the excavation of an additional 13 trial trenches in accordance with a written scheme of investigation (WSI) approved by the County Archaeologist (Wessex Archaeology 2003b). The fieldwork was undertaken between 12 January and 21 January 2004. This report presents the results of the further evaluation, together with an assessment of the likely impact of the development proposals.

#### 1.2 The Site: location, geology and topography

- 1.2.1 The Site is situated on the shoulder and bank of a large meander in the River Avon, and comprises a ‘teardrop’ shaped land parcel located some 300m north of Amesbury, bounded by the A303 and Countess Services to the

south, by houses fronting on to Countess Road to the west, and the floodplain of the River Avon to the east.

- 1.2.2 The Site comprises two blocks of land to the north and south of an access track running east-west from the A345 Countess Road along the line of a dismantled military light railway. The further evaluation areas are located in the southern half of the Site and include land under arable cultivation and land within the grass paddocks (Areas B and C, **Figure 1**).
- 1.2.3 The Site lies at 88m above Ordnance Datum (OD) at its northern limit and slopes gently to the south and east. The southern field lies at 75m OD and is generally flat, falling to 70m OD at its southern boundary
- 1.2.4 The underlying drift geology is complex and frequently changes within the Site. It comprises Tertiary Clay-with-Flints and a mixture of degraded clay and chalk as well as outcrops of green sand, weathered chalk and flint and calcareous material.

## **2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND**

### **2.1 Introduction**

2.1.1 The Site lies 3.2km to the east of Stonehenge and outside the UNESCO designated Stonehenge WHS. 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.

### **2.2 Previous archaeological investigations on the Site**

2.2.1 The Site has been the subject of an extensive programme of archaeological investigations in connection with both the current and previous development proposals. These have included: Environmental Assessment in connection with the Stonehenge Conservation and Management Project (SCMP; Darvill 1991; Darvill and Timby 1993); and evaluation in connection both with previous Stonehenge Visitor Centre proposals (Darvill 1995; Wessex Archaeology 1995) and unrelated development proposals (Richards 1993). The results of these investigations are summarised below.

2.2.2 Archaeological test pits and a single trial trench in the southern part of the Site, adjacent to the service area, produced a scatter of worked flint

interpreted as an area of Neolithic domestic activity focused on a low natural rise adjacent to the floodplain of the Avon (Richards 1993).

- 2.2.3 A geophysical survey across the Site identified three linear features (Darvill 1995).
- 2.2.4 An archaeological test-pit and auger survey across the Site identified evidence of activity from the prehistoric through to the medieval periods, situated predominantly along the bank of the River Avon in the southern half of the Site and including a significant quantity of 5-8<sup>th</sup> century Anglo-Saxon pottery (Wessex Archaeology 1995; 2003c).
- 2.2.5 Archaeological monitoring of ground investigation works carried out across the Site identified a relict channel aligned roughly east to west along the southern boundary of the paddocks, the upper fills of which produced worked flint and pottery possibly of a Bronze Age date (Wessex Archaeology 2002).
- 2.2.6 Archaeological evaluation and monitoring of ground investigation test pits in the central part of the Site in connection with the proposed undergrounding of overhead electricity cables (Wessex Archaeology 2003d) found a background scatter of burnt and struck flint and ceramic building material, but no archaeological features.
- 2.2.7 Trial trenching across the Site (Wessex Archaeology 2003a) identified two areas of archaeological activity. Three Neolithic-Early Bronze Age pits and a possible linear prehistoric gully were found in the northern half of the Site, reflecting the extensive prehistoric activity known in the wider vicinity.
- 2.2.8 In the southern part of the Site, a pit of probable Neolithic date was located in the vicinity of the suggested Neolithic settlement activity identified by Richards. A substantial masonry building, possibly of Romano-British date, was located close by. Four Anglo-Saxon sunken featured buildings with associated features were found, extending over some 380 m on the same low river terrace at between 71-74.5 m OD, indicating an extensive settlement. A number of undated postholes and pits were also found. A post-medieval ditch and a 20<sup>th</sup> century road or trackway associated with gravel and clay quarrying on the Site was identified in a number of trenches within the proposed car parking area (Area B). A second geophysical survey in the southern part of the Site was not able to confirm the extent of archaeological remains located by the trial trenching (Stratascan 2003).

### **3 METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Trenching strategy**

- 3.1.1 A written scheme of investigation for the further evaluation was prepared by Wessex Archaeology (Wessex Archaeology 2003b) and approved by Wiltshire County Council Archaeology Section. A total of 13 trenches of varying size was excavated as follows.

### *Area B*

<b>Area B</b>	<b>3.15 ha</b>
<b>Trenching proposals</b>	<b>Trench area</b>
2 no. 25m x 1.8m	90 sq. m
1 no. 25m x 5m	125 sq. m
5 no. 20m x 5m	500 sq. m
<b>8 trenches</b>	<b>715 sq. m (2.3%)</b>

### *Area C*

<b>Area C</b>	<b>1.9 ha</b>
<b>Trenches</b>	<b>Trench area</b>
1 no. 25m x 1.8m	45 sq. m
3 no. 25m x 5m	375 sq. m
1 no. 20m x 5m	100 sq. m
<b>5 trenches</b>	<b>520 sq. m (2.7%)</b>

3.1.2 Trench locations in Area B were targeted on proposed drainage swales and pond. Trench locations in Area C were selected to extend survey coverage within the proposed planting area.

## **3.2 Aims and objectives**

3.2.1 The aims of the proposed field evaluation survey were:

- to undertake a limited programme of intrusive fieldwork within the specified areas, so as to confirm the results of non-intrusive and trial trenching surveys undertaken previously;
- to enable an assessment of the importance of any remains and the significance of any potential impact to be determined; and
- to inform the development of an appropriate mitigation strategy.

3.2.2 The objectives of the proposed trial trenching were (within the limits of the specified techniques and locations):

- to confirm the presence or absence of archaeological features, structures, deposits, artefacts or ecofacts;
- to confirm the nature of the geophysical anomalies, where targeted;
- to confirm the presence or absence of archaeological remains in areas that appear blank;
- where such remains are present, to define their character, extent, quality and preservation; and
- where impact by the construction of the car park and/or screen planting is likely, to assess the significance of that impact.

## **3.3 Fieldwork methods**

3.3.1 All trenches were marked out on the ground prior to excavation. Topsoil and modern overburden were removed using a tracked 360° mechanical excavator equipped with 1.8m wide toothless bucket, operating under the constant supervision of an archaeologist. Mechanical excavation continued

the top of the first significant archaeological horizon or natural geological deposits, whichever was encountered first.

3.3.2 All features of whatever origin requiring clarification were cleaned by hand and recorded in plan at an appropriate scale. Sufficient of the features located were excavated by hand in order to fulfil the aims of the project. All archaeological features and deposits were fully recorded on Wessex Archaeology *pro forma* sheets in accordance with Wessex Archaeology guidelines for fieldwork recording.

3.3.3 Plans, sections and elevations were drawn as necessary at 1:10, 1:20 or 1:50 as appropriate. A full photographic record was compiled comprising black and white negatives, colour transparencies and digital images.

## **4 RESULTS**

### **4.1 Introduction**

4.1.1 Trench numbers 83 to 95 were allocated as an extension to the series used in the previous evaluation (Trenches 1-82). Detailed trench summaries are presented in **Appendix 1** and full details are available in the project archive.

4.1.2 The only features recorded were a short ditch containing much worked flint in Trench **83** and a possible sunken featured building of Anglo-Saxon date in Trench **85**. Small assemblages of flint were recovered from Trenches **84** and **90** but no anthropogenic features were observed. This section describes the features and deposits encountered in these trenches.

### **4.2 Trench 83 (Figure 2)**

4.2.1 Trench 83 was situated in the north-eastern corner of the grass paddocks in evaluation area C, north of previous Trench 36, which produced no archaeological finds or features.

4.2.2 Towards the north of Trench 83, ditch **8301** was orientated east to west and extended within the trench for *c.* 3.8m. The feature was 0.7m wide and 0.2m deep and contained three fills. A total of 121 pieces of struck flint was recovered from fill **8303**. The presence of struck flint in good condition on the machined surface of the feature and the adjacent trench base prompted the hand sieving of machine excavated spoil, in order to further investigate the significance of the deposit; this recovered a further 1,416 pieces, which are believed to derive from the ditch.

4.2.3 The flint assemblage contains a high proportion of material derived from core tool manufacture, consistent with an Early Neolithic or Early Bronze Age date, together with flakes from blade manufacture of probable Neolithic date. A small assemblage of abraded prehistoric pottery recovered from both the ditch fill **8303** and the sieved spoil may be Neolithic or Late Bronze Age in date. A few charred cereal grains and small quantities of charcoal fragments were also recovered from **8303**. Two small patches of charcoal

near ditch **8301** did not appear to be contained within archaeological features, and were not tested by excavation.

### **4.3 Trench 84**

4.3.1 In Trench **84**, worked and burnt flint and charcoal flecks visible at the level of machining in layers **8405** and **8407** were not found to be contained within features.

### **4.4 Trench 85 (Figure 2)**

4.4.1 Trench 85 was excavated immediately to the east of previous Trench 30, which contained an Anglo-Saxon sunken-featured building (Wessex Archaeology 2003a, SFB 3001). A sub-rectangular feature **8505**, 3.60m long by 3.20m wide and 0.63m deep and containing two fills, presumed to be a second SFB, was identified in Trench 85 less than 15m to the south of 3001, with its long axis orientated on a similar north-east to south-west alignment. Excavation of a 0.40m wide slot revealed a possible posthole **8504** cutting 0.13m below the floor level in the base of the feature. The lower fill of the SFB, **8503**, produced Early/Middle Saxon pottery and charred cereal grains.

### **4.5 Trench 90**

4.5.1 A small deposit of worked flint was recovered from subsoil layer **9003** in Trench **90**. Hand investigation revealed no cut features, and it is thought that biological processes had moved the artefacts down through the soil profile.

## **5 FINDS**

### **5.1 Introduction**

5.1.1 Finds were recovered from eight of the 13 evaluation trenches excavated. These have been quantified by material type within each context, and the results are presented in **Table 1** below. The assemblage is dominated by a large collection of worked flint, most of which was recovered from the sieving of spoil from ditch **8301**.

### **5.2 Worked flint**

#### *Trench 83*

5.2.1 Just over 1,500 pieces of struck flint were recovered from Trench 83 ditch **8301**, over 90% as a result of sieving of the spoil heap. A small quantity of burnt flint was also recovered from the spoil heap.

Tr	Context	Description	Animal Bone	Burnt Flint	CBM	Flint	Prehist Pottery	RB Pottery	Saxon Pottery	Metal
-	-	unstratified				4/190				
83	spoilheap	ditch 8301		10/286	1/1	1416/8798	11/47		1/3	1 Cu
83	8303	ditch 8301	2/1			121/306	9/21			
83	8306	subsoil					2/5	2/10		
84	8401	ploughsoil				1/9			3/8	
84	8405	layer		6/213		12/155	1/1		1/2	
85	8502	layer			1/10					1 Fe
85	8503	SFB 8505	24/126			6/1			6/60	
85	8510		1/1		1/26	1/23				
86	8601	ploughsoil	4/11			2/74				
88	8801	ploughsoil				2/74				
90	9003	?fluvial dep.				7/61				
92	9203	natural				2/3				
93	9303	natural				1/7				
		<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>31/139</b>	<b>16/499</b>	<b>3/37</b>	<b>1575/9701</b>	<b>23/74</b>	<b>2/10</b>	<b>11/73</b>	<b>2</b>

CBM = ceramic building material; Cu = copper alloy; Fe = iron

**Table 1: All finds by context (number/weight in grammes)**

- 5.2.2 A significant proportion (*c.* 20%) of the struck flint assemblage from Trench 83 is comprised of chips (< 10mm long). The material can be divided broadly into two types: dark grey flint with a glossy surface texture, which includes some material in a slightly weathered condition suggesting that it includes flint from ploughsoil contexts, and grey flint in mint condition, which accounts for approximately 85% of the assemblage including the chips. This component is derived from core tool manufacture.
- 5.2.3 The dark grey glossy component is a by-product of flake and blade tool production and contrasts markedly with the core tool waste. The flint itself is much darker than the core tool waste; it includes most, if not all the classifiable cores, the blades are more robust, but not necessarily larger, and the nodules smaller. It may be contemporary with the core tool waste or it may be residual; additional excavation may determine whether material of this type is prevalent throughout the feature or is restricted to the upper ploughsoil horizons. This glossy material is typical of material that might be expected from surface collection. The presence of a recognizable blade component suggests that this material may be of Early Neolithic date, although a probable unfinished oblique arrowhead is more typical of the Late Neolithic.
- 5.2.4 The most interesting feature of the assemblage is the large number of pieces of grey flint that appear to represent thinning flakes from the manufacture of bifacial tools. This material probably results from only one or two good quality large nodules. There are no associated cores, suggesting that the end product(s) were the tool(s), which have been taken away. The flakes are all very thin, which has resulted from the use of a soft hammer. They are also very fragile and do not survive prolonged ploughing, which means that they are seldom found in plough soil contexts. All phases of manufacture appear to be represented, including the roughing out phases, characterised by

cortical cover, through the shaping and thinning phase to the finishing flakes, with the attendant chips. Most of the flakes, which are characterised by the total absence of cortex, belong to the latter two phases of production. Striking platforms are well prepared, strengthened by platform abrasion and struck near to the edge of the core.

- 5.2.5 The grey flint waste material bears all the characteristics of bifacial (core tool) manufacture. Such tools include axes, but also bifacial or discoidal knives, laurel leaves and Early Bronze Age daggers. There is an unfinished bifacial knife from the feature, but this piece is patinated and therefore not in the same condition as the thinning flakes. There is also a small flake with a ground/polished surface from a polished axe or knife.
- 5.2.6 The thinning flakes are of a condition and technology that could date from the production of Lower Palaeolithic handaxes. However this is extremely unlikely and the flakes are more likely to date to the Early Neolithic or Early Bronze Age. The presence of the flake from the polished implement would tend to substantiate a Neolithic date and there is some support for this from the pottery. Evidence for the production of high quality Neolithic axes, including aspects of geographic location, raw material source and technology, is virtually unknown in the Stonehenge region and would be of great significance. However, what cannot be discounted is that this waste is of Early Bronze Age date and relates to the production of flint daggers, which were direct copies of the first copper or bronze daggers. Daggers, which mark the final flowering of the flint knappers' art in Britain, are known from some of the barrows around Stonehenge, but manufacturing sites have never been located. A production site of these extremely high status implements would therefore carry implications beyond the local area.

#### *Other trenches*

- 5.2.7 A small amount of worked flint was recovered from several other contexts across the Site. In the absence of chronologically distinctive tools or other utilised pieces, these cannot be dated closely.

### **5.3 Pottery**

- 5.3.1 A total of 34 sherds was recovered, and this includes sherds of prehistoric, Romano-British and Anglo-Saxon date.
- 5.3.2 Prehistoric material was confined to **Trench 83**, and comprises 22 sherds sparsely tempered with calcined flint; some sherds are visibly sandier in texture than others. All are quite badly abraded. Four of these sherds conjoin, and form part of a possible carination. In the absence of closely diagnostic features, the dating of this small group of sherds is difficult. The fabrics (and the possible carination) would fit within the known range of Late Bronze Age post-Deverel-Rimbury ceramics in the region, but equally would not be out of place within a Neolithic assemblage. Nine of these sherds came from fill **8303** of ditch **8301**, and a further 11 sherds retrieved from the spoilheap are also believed to derive from the ditch. Two sherds came from the subsoil of the trench (**8306**), associated with two Romano-British sherds. The latter

two sherds represent the only Romano-British pottery found during this phase of evaluation, and comprise one sandy greyware and one grog-tempered ware; both sherds are heavily abraded.

- 5.3.3 Three sherds from Trench 84 and six sherds from Trench 85 (SFB **8505**) are of Early/Middle Saxon date (5<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> century AD); six are organic-tempered and three are sandy with sparser organic inclusions. Both fabric types are typical of Early/Middle Saxon ceramics in the region, but cannot be more closely dated within this period. One further sandy sherd from the spoil heap in Trench 83 could also be of similar date. All sherds are abraded, but are in slightly better condition than the earlier material. Anglo-Saxon ceramics are not common in the area, or indeed within Wiltshire as a whole, but this small group augments other Early/Middle Saxon sherds previously found at Countess East (Wessex Archaeology 2003a).

#### **5.4 Animal bone**

- 5.4.1 Most of the animal bone was recovered from the fill of Anglo-Saxon SFB **8505**, and includes sheep (rib, incisor), cow (mandible, humerus, radius) and chicken; one of the cow bones is gnawed. Apart from one sheep-sized rib from layer **8510**, none of the other bone fragments recovered are identifiable to species. The two fragments from ditch **8301** are calcined.

#### **5.5 Other finds**

- 5.5.1 A tiny, heavily abraded fragment of a medieval roof tile came from the spoilheap in Trench 83, along with a plain copper alloy strap-end, probably post-medieval. Two further pieces of medieval roof tile came from Trench 85, along with an iron nail, probably post-medieval. A small quantity of burnt, unworked flint, of uncertain date and origin, was recovered from the spoilheap in Trench 83, and from Trench 84.

### **6 ENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE**

#### **6.1 Introduction**

- 6.1.1 Two bulk samples of around 20 litres each were taken from SFB **8505** and Neolithic or Bronze Age ditch **8301**. The samples were processed for the recovery and assessment of charred plant remains and charcoals, in order to characterise the nature and preservation of charred remains and aid in defining the potential significance of the archaeological features.

#### **6.2 Methodology**

- 6.2.1 The bulk samples were processed by standard flotation methods; the flot retained on a 0.5 mm mesh and the residues fractionated into 5.6 mm, 2 mm and 1 mm fractions and dried. The coarse fractions (>5.6 mm) were sorted, weighed and discarded.
- 6.2.2 The flots were scanned under a x10 - x30 stereo-binocular microscope and presence of charred remains quantified, in order to present data to record the

preservation and nature of the charred plant and charcoal remains and assess their potential to address the project and subsidiary aims.

### 6.3 Results

6.3.1 The results are presented in **Table 2** below. Both samples contained quite large amounts of roots, while the flot sizes themselves were relatively small in size (60 to 100 ml). In contrast to previous evaluation on the Site (Wessex Archaeology 2003), no land snails were seen in the samples.

				Flot								Residue
Feature type/ no	Context	Sample	size litres	flot size ml	Grain	Chaff	Weed uncharred	seeds charred	Charcoal >5.6mm	Other	Charcoal >5.6mm	
Neolithic/Bronze Age												
Ditch 8301	8303	2	17	50 <sup>35</sup>	B	-	-	C	C	-		
Anglo-Saxon												
SFB 8505	8503	1	18	110 <sup>80-</sup>	C	-	b	-	-	-	C	

KEY: A\*\* = exceptional, A\* = 30+ items, A = ≥10 items, B = 9 - 5 items, C = < 5 items, (h) = hazelnuts, smb = small mammal bones; Moll-t = terrestrial molluscs Moll-f = freshwater molluscs; Analysis, C = charcoal, P = plant, M = molluscs

NOTE: <sup>1</sup>flot is total, but flot in superscript = ml of rooty material. <sup>2</sup>Unburnt seed in lower case to distinguish from charred remains

**Table 2: Assessment of the charred plant remains and charcoal**

#### *Charred plant remains*

6.3.2 The sample from the Neolithic/Bronze Age ditch fill **8303** contained only a few fragments of cereal, a barley grain in good condition and a grain of free-threshing wheat. Whilst neither cereal is out of keeping with Neolithic or Bronze Age deposits, given the high number of roots and the shallowness of the feature, the possibility that the material may have been reworked from the Anglo-Saxon occupation in the vicinity cannot be entirely discounted. Any potential for further analysis would, therefore, rely on the recovery of a more securely stratified sample.

6.3.3 The sample from the fill of the Anglo-Saxon sunken featured building **8503** contained around six grains of barley and a few grains of probable free-threshing wheats, although these latter grains were represented only by fragments. No remains of chaff were recovered, and the only seed of a wild species was of vetch/tare (*Vicia* sp.). These results are comparable to samples from previous evaluation at Countess East (Wessex Archaeology 2003a), where both free-threshing wheats and barley grains were recovered, and present some potential for examining the economy of the site.

#### *Charcoal*

6.3.4 Charcoal was generally sparse in both the Neolithic or Bronze Age and Anglo-Saxon sampled contexts. Relatively few large charcoal fragments were recovered, and the samples generally reveal little potential for wood charcoal analysis.

## 7 DISCUSSION

### 7.1 Summary

- 7.1.1 Further evaluation of the proposed car park and screen planting areas (Areas B and C) at Countess East has identified only two archaeological features, both located in Area C. No features or deposits of archaeological interest were found in Area B.
- 7.1.2 The earliest feature is a ditch in Trench 83, containing pottery and struck flint with a potential date range of Neolithic or Late Bronze Age, together with charred remains and calcined bone. Trench 83 coincides with a concentration of worked flint identified in the previous test-pitting (Wessex Archaeology 2003c).
- 7.1.3 The presence of a substantial assemblage of flint apparently derived from or in close association with the ditch is potentially of at least regional significance. The bulk of the assemblage is derived from the production of core tools; these could be fine functional items, such as Neolithic hand axes or knives, or high status objects, possibly Early Bronze Age flint copies of copper or bronze daggers. The condition of the material and its association with a feature indicates that it has not moved far from its place of deposition, suggesting that it represents evidence of *in situ*, or near-*in situ* manufacture. Whether the material is of Early Neolithic or Early Bronze Age date, evidence of tool manufacture is unprecedented within the Stonehenge environs, although Neolithic flint mines are known close to Durrington Walls, less than 1km to the north of the Site (Booth and Stone 1952). The associated macrofossils, if not intrusive, offer potential for radiocarbon dating.
- 7.1.4 The previous evaluation located a small number of prehistoric features ranging in date from the Neolithic to the Early Bronze Age (Wessex Archaeology 2003a). These were mostly situated in the northern half of the Site, but one example in the southern part of the Site was located in the vicinity of a Neolithic artefact scatter suggesting a domestic settlement focus (Richards 1993). Taken as a whole, the evidence for Neolithic/Bronze Age activity across the Site is consistent with a general background level of activity, as might be expected in a prehistoric landscape of international importance. Nevertheless, the potential significance of the tool production evidence should not be under-estimated.
- 7.1.5 The identification of an Anglo-Saxon SFB in Trench 85, situated close to SFB 3001 in Trench 30, adds to the evidence for settlement, although the range of features that might be associated with this activity is not known. The absence of archaeological features in Area B, and indeed in Trenches 86 and 87 to the east of the SFB, suggests that the settlement is topographically confined to the low river terrace identified previously, at between 71 and 74.5 m OD.
- 7.1.6 The settlement evidence identified in the evaluations is dominated by SFBs, which were used as craft workshops or stores; no evidence for post-built

structures likely to have served as dwellings was found in any of the trenches. This may reflect the more ephemeral nature of the archaeological traces left by post-built structures; such an imbalance in the preservation of structures of varying function is not uncommon on sites of this period. Similarly, no evidence for burials that might be associated with the settlement was found in either phase of evaluation trenching.

- 7.1.7 The Anglo-Saxon settlement evidence may be regarded as of at least regional importance. Although the known evidence is confined to SFBs, these features are generally well-preserved; the presence of sealed Saxon contexts represents a potentially important contribution to our understanding of the development of the Stonehenge landscape and its environs.
- 7.1.8 Despite the restricted nature of the Anglo-Saxon settlement evidence, a reasonable degree of confidence may be attached to the combined results of the evaluation. The further evaluation has both increased the total trenched sample in Areas B and C to approximately 7% or greater and deployed a high proportion of 5m wide trenches, in order to maximise the potential for smaller, more ephemeral features to be identified. It is considered unlikely, therefore, that substantial features or concentrations of activity within the further evaluation areas have been missed. Nevertheless, the possibility must be accepted that smaller, ephemeral features may survive that have not been detected by the combined evaluation sample.

## 7.2 Likely impact of the proposed development

- 7.2.1 The proposed location of the development is shown on **Figure 1**, together with the areas of potential based on the combined results of the evaluations.
- 7.2.2 In **Area B**, the **proposed car park** will be constructed largely above existing levels. However, excavation for the drainage swales and pond will penetrate below the topsoil in these locations. No archaeological features were found in this part of the Site in either phase of evaluation, although the potential for scattered small and/or ephemeral features to survive here, which might be adversely affected by the car park works, cannot be entirely ruled out.
- 7.2.3 In **Area C**, the line of the **proposed access route** through the Site coincides with Anglo-Saxon SFB 8505 in Trench 85. The access route here is to be constructed entirely above existing levels, with the topsoil retained *in situ*, as with the proposed WHS transit links. No excavation would be required for construction or maintenance of the access road, the intention being to avoid damage to archaeological remains and allow these to be preserved *in situ*. The road structure would be removable and the burial of remains would, therefore, be a reversible impact. Adjustments to the horizontal alignment of the access road may allow this location to be avoided, although the survival of further SFBs or other settlement evidence in the immediate vicinity cannot be discounted.
- 7.2.4 The proposed woodland character **planting** in **Area C** would affect the prehistoric ditch and flint scatter in Trench 83. Any excavation required for planting, and subsequent root penetration would adversely affect the survival

of the ditch 8301 and the integrity, preservation and future accessibility of the flintwork.

## **8 THE ARCHIVE**

### **8.1 Location**

- 8.1.1 The field records have been compiled to form an indexed and internally cross-referenced archive, which is currently held at the offices of Wessex Archaeology at Old Sarum, Salisbury, Wiltshire, under the project code 54700. In due course the archive is to be deposited with Salisbury and South Wiltshire Museum, 65 The Close, Salisbury SP1 2EN.

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## 10 APPENDIX 1: TRENCH SUMMARIES

### TRENCH 83

NGR	415504.1, 142492.7, 76.6 / 415504.4, 142468.2, 76.0	
Dimensions	Length 24.60, Width 5.00, Max depth 0.50 (m)	
Context	Description	Depth (m)
8301	Cut of shallow ditch running east to west across most of the width of trench. This was V-shaped in profile with moderately sloping sides.	0.50-0.70
8302	Fill of ditch 8301. Reddish brown silty clay with sparse gravel.	0.15-0.20
8303	Fill of ditch 8301. Greyish brown silty clay with moderate gravel and abundant struck flint.	0.00-0.15
8304	Fill of ditch 8301. Greyish brown silty clay with rare gravel.	0.00-0.07
8305	Topsoil Dark reddish brown silty loam with occasional gravel and flint frequent fine roots.	0.00-0.10
8306	Subsoil Dark reddish brown silty clay with sparse flint and gravel.	0.10-0.50
8307	Natural Reddish brown silty clay with moderate gravel. Two small patches with charcoal flecks were noted.	0.48+

### TRENCH 84

NGR	415565.0, 142484.7, 75.0 / 415565.0, 142, 465.2, 74.7	
Dimensions	Length 18.00, Width 5.50, Max depth 0.55 (m)	
Context	Description	Depth (m)
8401	Ploughsoil Dark greyish brown silty loam with frequent gravel and flint.	0.00-0.30
8402	Fill of 8404. Dark greyish brown silty loam with frequent gravel.	0.30-0.50
8403	Subsoil Mid greyish brown silty loam with moderate gravel.	0.30-0.45
8404	Cut of feature Possibly a ditch but only seen in section. This had moderate sides, a flat base and the same texture as ploughsoil. 1.40m wide	0.22
8405	Layer of greyish brown silty loam with frequent gravel especially at interface with 8403. May have been an earlier subsoil, as it did contain stuck flint and small particles of pottery although these may have been deposited by worm action.	0.45-0.58
8406	Natural Fluvial deposit of yellow brown silty clay with frequent gravel.	0.50+
8407	Layer similar to 8405.	
8408	Natural Fluvial deposit of reddish brown silty clay with occasional gravel at east end of trench.	0.50+

### TRENCH 85

NGR	415609.0, 142497.6, 74.4 / 415608.5, 142472.3, 74.2	
Dimensions	Length 25.00, Width 5.00, Max depth 0.32 (m)	
Context	Description	Depth (m)
8501	Ploughsoil Dark greyish brown silty loam with frequent flint and gravel.	0.00-0.30
8502	Layer/Deposit Dark greyish brown silty loam with frequent gravel and flint. Spread over west end of trench and upper fill of 8505. ?Possible remnants of earlier topsoil.	0.30+/(0.56)
8503	Lower fill of 8505. Dark greyish brown silty loam with frequent large gravel and flint and pea grits.	0.56-0.90
8504	Post Hole Shallow "scoop" at base of SFB 8505. Diameter of 0.35m.	0.13
8505	Sunken Featured Building Subrectangular with steep sides and flat base, not well defined. Approximately 3.60m long and 3.40m wide.	0.64
8506	Natural Fluvial deposit of reddish brown silty loam with frequent gravel.	0.30-0.32
8507	Natural Fluvial deposit of large gravel and rounded chalk from middle to east end of trench.	0.30+
8508	Natural Fluvial deposit of mid reddish brown silty loam with occasional gravel and chalk.	0.30+
8509	Natural Fluvial deposit of greyish brown silty loam with frequent gravel.	0.30+

### TRENCH 86

<b>NGR</b>	415623,1, 142506.4, 73.8 / 415644.7, 142521.5, 72.8	
<b>Dimensions</b>	Length 26.42, Width 5.43, Max depth 0.32 (m)	
<b>Context</b>	<i>Description</i>	<b>Depth (m)</b>
<b>8601</b>	<b>Ploughsoil</b> Dark greyish brown silty loam with common flint.	0.00-0.26
<b>8602</b>	<b>Natural</b> Pale brown silty loam with frequent flint.	0.26+

### TRENCH 87

<b>NGR</b>	415664.2, 142527.8, 71.9 / 415664.4, 142502.1, 72.4	
<b>Dimensions</b>	Length 25.70, Width 2.26, Max depth 0.24 (m)	
<b>Context</b>	<i>Description</i>	<b>Depth (m)</b>
<b>8701</b>	<b>Ploughsoil</b> Greyish brown sandy silt loam with frequent flint.	0.00-0.22
<b>8702</b>	<b>Natural</b> This varied from north; brown silty clay with gravel, gravel with rounded chalk, and flint gravel with coarse sand to south.	0.22+

### TRENCH 88

<b>NGR</b>	415526.5, 142421.7, 74.3 / 415526.9, 142398.7, 74.1	
<b>Dimensions</b>	Length 22.52, Width 4.85, Max depth 0.64 (m)	
<b>Context</b>	<i>Description</i>	<b>Depth (m)</b>
<b>8801</b>	<b>Topsoil</b> Dark greyish brown silty loam with abundant fine root .	0.00-0.23
<b>8802</b>	<b>Subsoil</b> Brown silty loam with some fine sand with frequent gravel and roots.	0.23-0.60
<b>8803</b>	<b>Natural</b> Varied from north, brown silty loam with varying gravel, to south coarse sand-sized rounded chalk and frequent rounded flint.	0.60+

### TRENCH 89

<b>NGR</b>	415542.3, 142369.4, 73.1 / 415542.1, 142348.3, 73.0	
<b>Dimensions</b>	Length 27.50, Width 1.85, Max depth 0.45 (m)	
<b>Context</b>	<i>Description</i>	<b>Depth (m)</b>
<b>8901</b>	<b>Ploughsoil</b> Mid – dark brown silty loam with sparse flint.	0.00-0.27
<b>8902</b>	<b>Subsoil</b> Mid yellowish brown silty loam with sparse flint.	0.27-0.44
<b>8903</b>	<b>Natural</b> Fluvial deposit of mid brown silty clay with sparse flint .	0.44+

### TRENCH 90

<b>NGR</b>	415525.2, 142347.2, 73.2 / 415526.7, 142324.4, 73.1	
<b>Dimensions</b>	Length 22.76, Width 1.93, Max depth 1.08 (m)	
<b>Context</b>	<i>Description</i>	<b>Depth (m)</b>
<b>9001</b>	<b>Ploughsoil</b> Dark brown silty clay with sparse gravel and chalk.	0.00-0.29
<b>9002</b>	<b>Subsoil</b> Light to mid brown sandy clay with sparse gravel and chalk.	0.29-0.76
<b>9003</b>	<b>Natural</b> Probably fluvial deposit of mid brown sandy silt loam with frequent large and small flint.	0.29-0.76
<b>9004</b>	<b>Natural</b> Light brown sandy clay with occasional large flint.	0.76-0.95
<b>9005</b>	<b>Natural feature</b> Water cut feature.	
<b>9006</b>	<b>Natural</b> Mid brown silty clay with occasional gravel.	0.95+

### TRENCH 91

<b>NGR</b>	415564.9, 142329.2, 72.8 / 415565.1, 142, 309.0, 72.9	
<b>Dimensions</b>	Length 20.20, Width 5.74, Max depth 0.55 (m)	
<b>Context</b>	<i>Description</i>	<b>Depth (m)</b>
<b>9101</b>	<b>Ploughsoil</b> Mid to dark brown silty loam with occasional flint.	0.00-0.28
<b>9102</b>	<b>Subsoil</b> Band of mid greyish brown silty clay with sparse chalk.	0.28-0.35
<b>9103</b>	<b>Natural</b> Loose bands of gravel with mid brown clay.	0.35+

### TRENCH 92

<b>NGR</b>	415475.7, 142298.0, 73.2 / 415478.5, 142273.2, 73.0	
<b>Dimensions</b>	Length 24.93, Width 2.08, Max depth 0.90 (m)	
<b>Context</b>	<i>Description</i>	<b>Depth (m)</b>
<b>9201</b>	<b>Ploughsoil</b> Mid to dark brown silty loam with frequent flint and occasional chalk.	0.00-0.34m
<b>9202</b>	<b>Subsoil</b> Mid brown silty clay with sparse flint.	0.34-0.58m
<b>9203</b>	<b>Natural</b> Light to mid brown silty clay with occasional flint.	0.58m+
<b>9204</b>	<b>Natural</b> Patches of light greenish yellow soliflucted chalk.	0.80m+
<b>9205</b>	<b>Natural</b> Gravel deposit.	0.90m+

### TRENCH 93

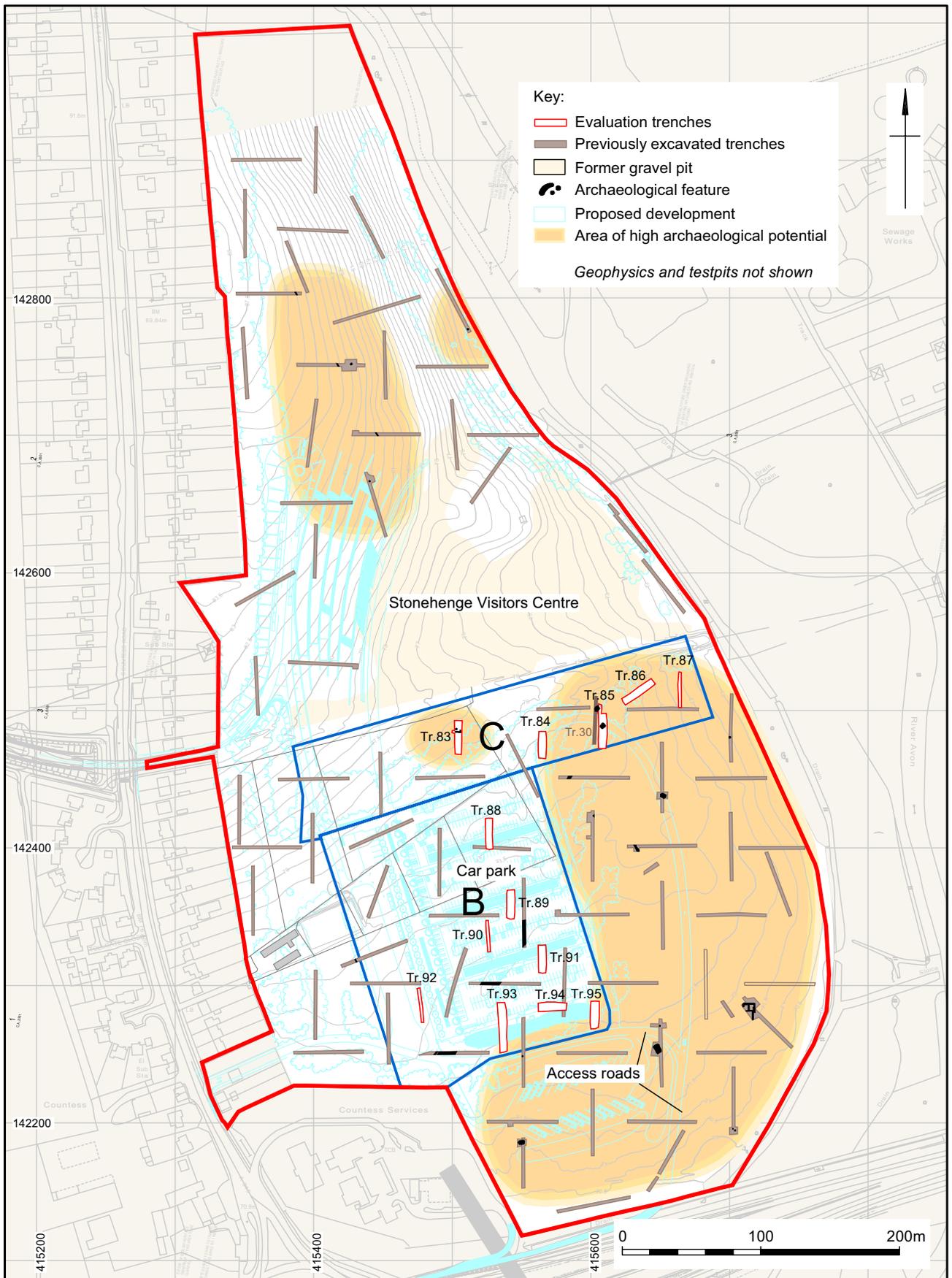
<b>NGR</b>	415535.1, 142287.6, 72.7 / 415537.2, 142251.6, 72.5	
<b>Dimensions</b>	Length 36.26, Width 5.38, Max depth 0.50 (m)	
<b>Context</b>	<i>Description</i>	<b>Depth (m)</b>
<b>9301</b>	<b>Ploughsoil</b> Dark brown loose silty clay loam with small flint fragments.	0.00-0.30
<b>9302</b>	<b>Subsoil</b> Mid brown silty clay with sparse small calcareous inclusions.	0.30-0.38
<b>9303</b>	<b>Natural</b> Large flint gravel much was in whole nodules.	0.38+
<b>9304</b>	<b>Natural</b> Sand-sized flint and chalk, with flint gravel.	0.38+
<b>9305</b>	<b>Natural</b> Brown silty clay. A sondage showed that <b>9305</b> overlay <b>9304</b> which overlay <b>9303</b> .	0.38+

### TRENCH 94

<b>NGR</b>	415562.2, 142284.3, 72.8 / 415582.5, 142284.6, 72.6	
<b>Dimensions</b>	Length 20.29, Width 6.41, Max depth 0.40 (m)	
<b>Context</b>	<i>Description</i>	<b>Depth (m)</b>
<b>9401</b>	<b>Ploughsoil</b> Dark brown silty clay loam with small flint gravel and some very small chalk fragments.	0.00-0.33
<b>9402</b>	<b>Natural</b> Brown sandy clay with very pale brown clays and some nodule-sized flint which underlay the sandy clay.	0.33+

### TRENCH 95

<b>NGR</b>	415603.0, 142288.6, 72.6 / 415603.3, 142268.7, 72.3	
<b>Dimensions</b>	Length 19.93, Width 6.50, Max depth 0.35 (m)	
<b>Context</b>	<i>Description</i>	<b>Depth (m)</b>
<b>9501</b>	<b>Ploughsoil</b> Dark brown silty clay loam with small flint gravel and some very small chalk fragments.	0.00-0.33
<b>9502</b>	<b>Natural</b> Brown silty clay with coarse flint gravel and in south-east very large flints in chalk and flint derived sand and gravel.	0.33+



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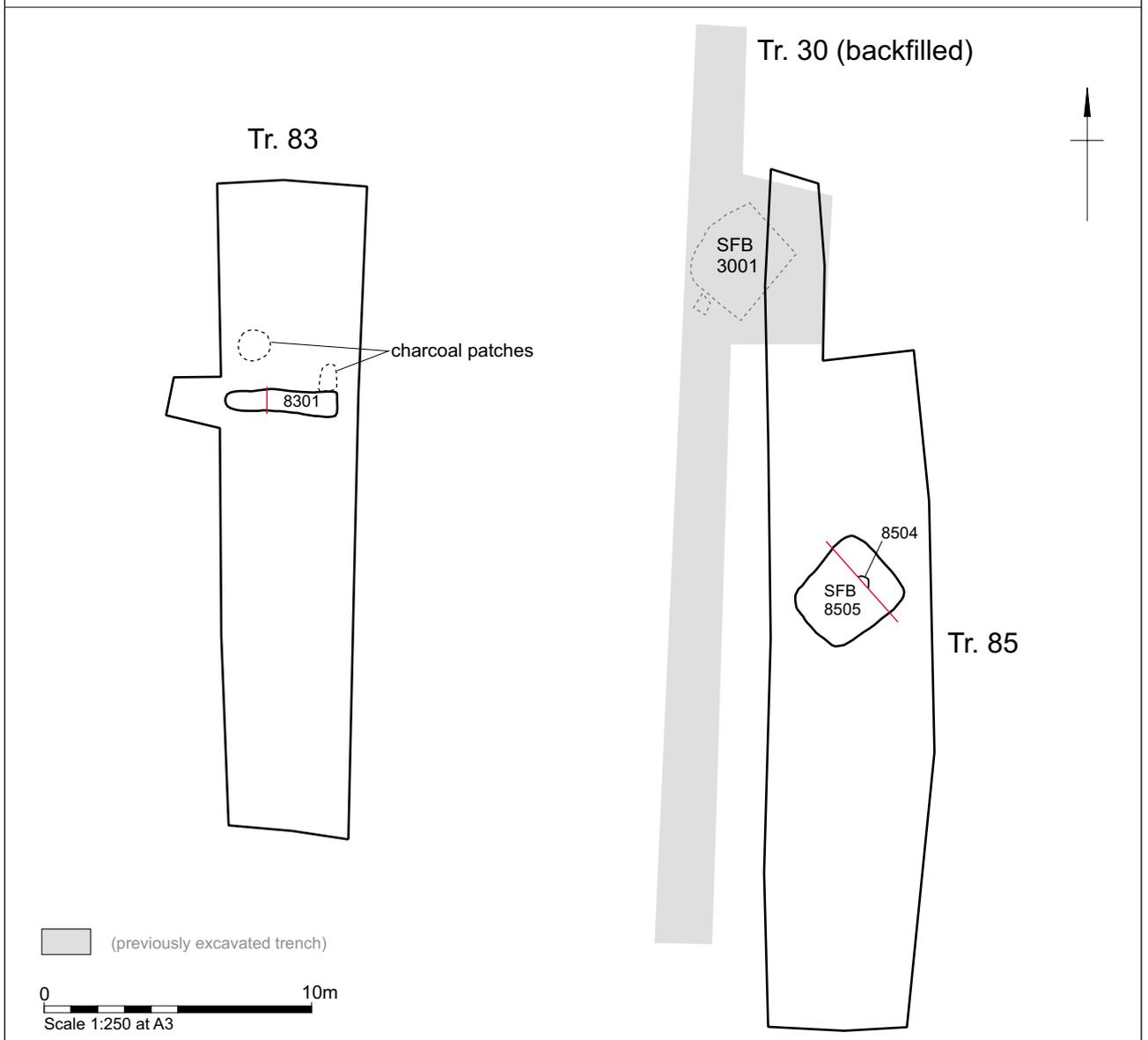
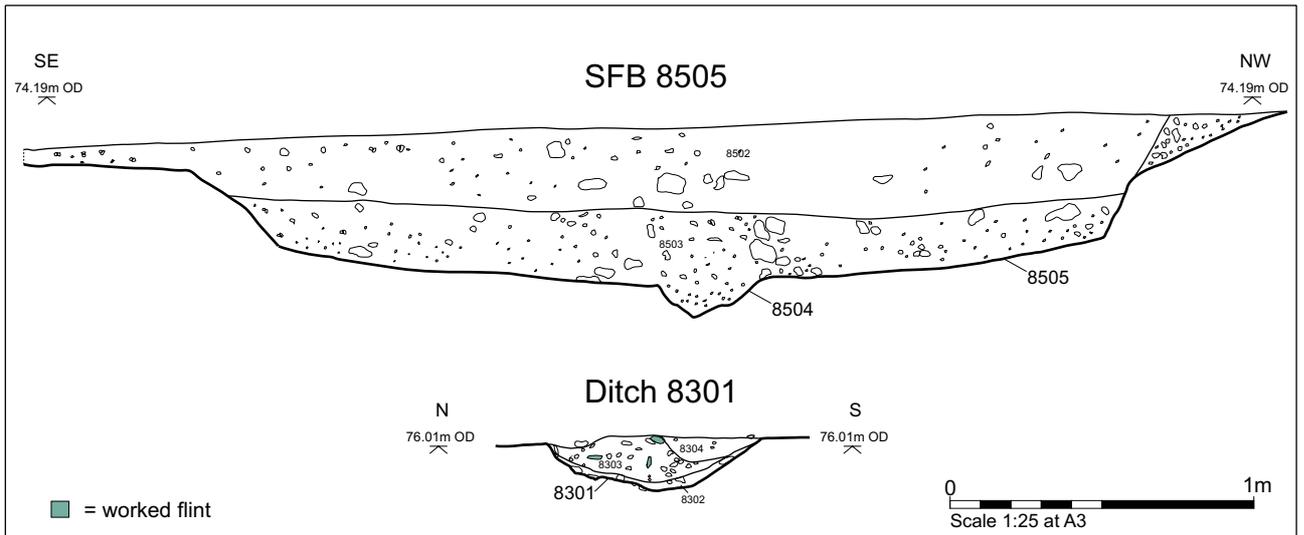
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Further evaluation: Trench location plan

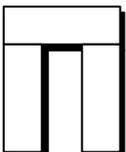
Figure 1



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Locations of archaeological features and associated sections

Figure 2



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