SILBURY HILL
AVEBURY
WILTSHIRE

PROGRAMME OF
ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORDING

For

ENGLISH HERITAGE

CA REPORT: 05070

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SILBURY HILL
AVEBURY
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CA PROJECT: 1955
CA REPORT: 05070

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Signed: ...........................................................................

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Fig. 2  The site, showing location of groundworks (1: 1250)
SUMMARY

Site Name: Silbury Hill,
Location: Avebury, Wiltshire
NGR: ST 0995 6845
Type: Programme of archaeological recording
Date: 18-20 April 2005
SMC: Certificate of Class VI Consent for Works to Properties in Care
Location of Archive: To be deposited with English Heritage
Site Code: SHA 05

A programme of archaeological recording was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology (CA) during groundworks associated with the installation of a water pipe connecting a recently installed water trough at Silbury Hill, Avebury, Wiltshire.

No features or deposits of archaeological interest were observed during groundworks and no artefactual material predating the modern period was recovered.
1. **INTRODUCTION**

1.1 In April 2005 Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out a programme of archaeological recording for English Heritage at Silbury Hill, Avebury, Wiltshire (centred on NGR: ST 0995 6845; Fig. 1).

1.2 The archaeological fieldwork was undertaken to fulfil a condition attached to a Certificate of Class VI Consent for Works to Properties in Care. The objective of the programme of archaeological recording was to record all archaeological remains exposed during the groundworks carried out.

1.3 The archaeological fieldwork was carried out in accordance with a written scheme of investigation (WSI) produced by CA 2005 and approved by English Heritage. The fieldwork also followed the *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief* issued by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (1999).

**The site**

1.4 The site lies to the southern side of Silbury Hill and comprised a trench excavated across the carriageway of the A4 and its associated grass verges/banks (Fig. 2). The site lies at approximately 155m AOD, the road surface gently rising to the north-west.

1.5 The underlying geology of the area is mapped as Middle Chalk of the Upper Cretaceous Period (Geological Survey of Great Britain 1974).

**Archaeological background**

1.6 Silbury Hill is located on a slight natural spur on the western side of the Kennet valley, south of the village of Avebury. The monument has a flat-topped conical mound, which is 39.3m high and has a diameter of 167.6m, surrounded by a quarry ditch. The site is protected as a Scheduled Ancient Monument (National Monument 21707: Silbury Hill – a Monumental Neolithic Mound West of the River Kennet and South of Avebury Village) and is incorporated within a World Heritage Site (9: Stonehenge, Avebury and Associated Sites).
Methodology

1.7 The fieldwork followed the methodology set out within the WSI (CA 2005). An archaeologist was present during intrusive groundworks, comprising the mechanical excavation of a single trench measuring 0.4m in width and up to 1.2m in depth in the location shown on Figure 2.

1.8 Written, graphic and photographic records were compiled in accordance with the CA Technical Manual 1: *Excavation Recording Manual* (1996).

1.9 Deposits were assessed for their palaeo-environmental potential but none required sampling in accordance with the CA Technical Manual 2: *The Taking of Samples for Palaeo-environmental/Palaeo-economic Analysis from Archaeological Sites* (1994).

1.10 Subject to the agreement of the legal landowner the site archive will be deposited with English Heritage.

2. RESULTS

2.1 This section provides an overview of the archaeological results; detailed summaries of the recorded contexts can be found in Appendix 1.

2.2 The natural chalk substrate, 102, was revealed at a depth of between 0.2m and 0.4m below present ground level in the bank/grass verge areas, and 0.75m below the surface of the road.

Excavations across the carriageway

2.3 The natural chalk was immediately overlain by concrete 107, which averaged 0.25m in thickness. This was sealed by gravel levelling deposit 106, which averaged 0.25m in thickness and formed the sub-base for modern tarmacadam road surface 104.

2.4 Kerb stones set in concrete over hardcore sub-base 105/112 defined the edges of road 104. A pavement and associated kerb, 103, had been constructed at a later date over the northern edge of road 104 and its original kerb 105.
**Excavation across the roadside verges**

2.5 The section of trench excavated through the bank/grass verge on the northern side of the road revealed natural chalk overlain by make-up/levelling deposit 101, the latter deposit averaged 0.55m in thickness and was in turn sealed by 0.2m of topsoil and turf 100.

2.6 On the southern side of the road the natural chalk was sealed by make-up/levelling deposit 109 averaging 0.65m in thickness. This had been cut by modern service trenches 110 and 111. Finally, the whole sequence was sealed by 0.4m of topsoil and turf 108.

2.7 No features or deposits of archaeological interest were observed during groundworks and, despite visual scanning of spoil, no artefactual material predating the modern period was recovered.

3. **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

3.1 Despite the archaeological potential of the application area (see archaeological background above), the programme of archaeological recording identified no archaeological remains within the area of observed groundworks. The absence of any buried topsoil or subsoil horizons and the presence of the underlying natural chalk so close to the present ground surface suggests that the ground level has been truncated during recent times, in all likelihood during upgrading of the A4 road.

4. **CA PROJECT TEAM**

4.1 Fieldwork was undertaken by Dave Cudlip and Franco Vartuca, who also compiled this report. The illustrations were prepared by Lorna Gray. The archive has been compiled by Franco Vartuca, and prepared for deposition by Ed McSloy. The project was managed for CA by Cliff Bateman.
5. REFERENCES

CA 2005 Silbury Hill, Wiltshire: Written Scheme of Investigation for a Programme of Archaeological Recording.

## APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

| 100 | Topsoil and turf: moderately firm, mid red-brown clay silt containing the odd small fragment/fleck of chalk. Depth 0.2m. |
| 101 | Make-up/levelling deposit: soft, light to mid grey-brown sandy silt with occasional small fragments and flecks of crushed chalk, and the odd small nodule of flint. Depth 0.25m. |
| 102 | Natural substrate: soft, off-white chalk with very occasional small nodules of flint. Excavated to a depth of 1m (not bottomed). |
| 103 | Pavement and kerb: tarmac pavement and concrete kerb stone, recently added covering part of the northern edge of road and its original kerb 104/105. Depth 0.1m. |
| 104 | A4 road: tarmac with kerb stone edges 105/112. Depth 0.3m. |
| 105 | Kerb stone: set in concrete over a rubble hardcore base consisting of medium to large sized angular fragments of crushed limestone mixed with loose, mid grey-brown sandy silt. Depth 0.5m. |
| 106 | Make-up deposit for road 104: hard, mid grey coarse gravel hardcore cemented with concrete. Depth 0.25m. |
| 107 | Sub-base deposit for road 104: very hard, pale grey coarse gravel and concrete mixed with lenses/patches of pale brown-orange sand. Depth 0.25m. |
| 108 | Same as 100 above. Depth 0.4m. |
| 109 | Same as 101 above. Depth 0.65m. |
| 110 | Modern cut: trench running parallel with southern edge of road 104 cutting northern edge of trench 111. Contains ducts for fibre optic cables. Depth 0.4m, width 0.3m. |
| 111 | Modern cut: trench running parallel with southern edge of road 104, and trench 110 cutting it. Contains water main. Depth 0.7m, width 0.5m. |
| 112 | Same as 105 above. Depth 0.55m. |
FIGURE NO. 1

Site location plan

Silbury Hill, Avebury, Wiltshire

SCALE 1:25,000@A4

PROJECT TITLE

COTSWOLD ARCHAEOLOGY

PROJECT NO. 1955

FIGURE NO. 1

Reproduced from the 1998 Ordnance Survey Explorer map with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. © Crown copyright Cotswold Archaeological Trust AL50196A.
Silbury Hill, Avebury, Wiltshire

Location of observed groundworks

observed groundworks

buried connection to water trough