

Written Representation in respect of Application for Development Consent for the A303 Amesbury to Berwick Down Scheme

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The complexes of monuments at Stonehenge and Avebury provide an exceptional insight into the funerary and ceremonial practices in Britain in the Neolithic and Bronze Age. Together with their settings and associated sites, they form landscapes without parallel. (Criterion (iii) Statement of Outstanding Universal Value, WHC-13-37.com/8E)

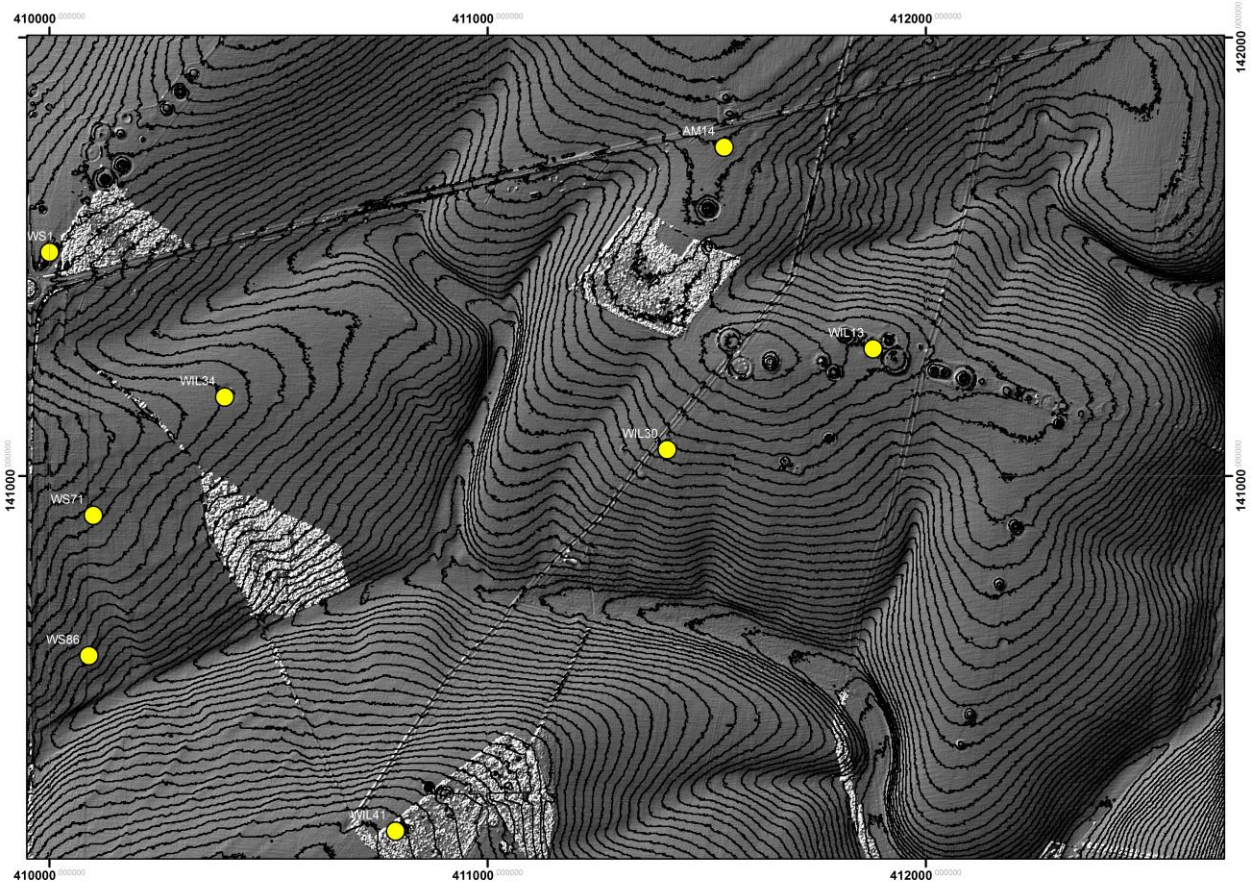
A good understanding of the historic environment is fundamental to ensuring people appreciate and enjoy their heritage and provides the essential first step towards its effective preservation. (from Historic England Research and the Historic Environment, rear page of Historic England Research Reports 2015-)

Preamble: in order to digitally investigate the impact of the Scheme a copy of its 3D digital model was requested from Highways England. As this, so far, has not been forthcoming my comments are not informed by the digital landscape and setting analysis that I had hoped to undertake and to show with illustration in this representation.

The writer has had a long-standing interest in and contribution to the understanding of both halves of the World Heritage Site (WHS), its monuments and their landscape setting, principally through remote sensing. This includes for Stonehenge the analysis of the first complete airborne laser scanning (lidar) survey of a World Heritage Site. I represent the Avebury and Stonehenge Archaeological Research Group (ASAHRG) on the Avebury and Stonehenge WHS Steering Committees and the WHS Partnership Panel. The following comments are my personal view.

My contribution is given in the hope that it will help to underpin understanding of the true impact of the A303 Scheme as submitted on the monuments and landscape of the Stonehenge WHS. The Scheme entrains irreversible destruction of the natural, topographic and cultural integrity of the central western part of the World Heritage Site through the siting of a western dual-tunnel portal and its associated deep cutting within the World Heritage Site. The Applicant fails to acknowledge the full importance of the Sites and their Setting, individually and collectively, in the area impacted by the Scheme's western design, and its consequential detriment to the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the WHS.

In landscape terms the western section of the road scheme directly affects the, at present, undisturbed open landscape of the upper western arm of the Stonehenge Bottom dry valley system between Wilsford and Lake Downs. Located here are monuments that include a unique cluster of Neolithic long barrows and a mortuary structure (Figure1). This grouping of Early Neolithic monuments, both long mounds and oval barrows, and their particular settings (Bewley, Crutchley and Shell 2005, *New Light on an Ancient Landscape*, *Antiquity* 79, p642) around the upper part of the western dry valley system, is unique in Southern England, not just to the WHS. The concentration of these monuments is clearly the dominant focus of early Neolithic human activity (3700-3000 BCE) in the World Heritage site, prior to the construction of the Stonehenge monument. They remain a focus of further burial activity in the later Neolithic (3000-2200 BCE) and the Chalcolithic and Early Bronze Age (2500-1500 BCE), spanning the period that defines the OUV of the WHS.



The early dating (3500 BCE) by Parker Pearson of bluestone quarrying and Cunnington's record of a bluestone being encountered in Boles Barrow on Salisbury Plain suggests the association of the people of these monuments with the first stage of the Stonehenge monument itself. The mounds retain their significance into the Early Bronze Age as an enduring focus for round barrow cemeteries, both the long linear 'display' cemeteries of Winterbourne Stoke and Normanton Down and the grouped burials by Wilsford 34 and Wilsford 41.

It is axiomatic that any monument involving significant expenditure of effort in its construction is not randomly placed in the landscape, and the decision of its placement took into account local topography as well as the position of monuments already present in the landscape. Severing of the monument spatial relationships by the proposed Scheme, which brings an irreversible modification of the landscape, removes for future generations the opportunity to physically understand and experience their setting by moving between them, something the principal conservation bodies profess a desire to expand in the WHS. There is a growing interest in prehistoric mobility (Neolithic Studies Group Seminar Papers 14, 2016), which includes local movement as well as long distance for access to resources and interaction with other communities.

The introduction and positioning of the Green Bridge over the western cutting and the Canopy at the Western Portal into the Scheme is an acknowledgement of this connectivity between monuments, but are inadequate and token in nature, given the overall irreversible impact of the deep cutting over which they are positioned, and their short life in the long term of this historic landscape.

The adverse impact of the western cutting on the setting of the long barrows WS1 and W34 in particular, as well as physically destroying their local topographic setting and that of their

associated monuments will, due to its close proximity, introduce considerable traffic noise reverberating from the cutting walls.

The importance of the WS1 long barrow to the OUV of the WHS should not be underestimated given the recent radiocarbon dating to the Early Neolithic (3630–3360 cal BC) of the male burial with flint artefact in a single grave within it – the first recognition of an individual burial in a monument that is otherwise communal in its burial practice.

Finally, and briefly, the construction of the Western Cutting will destroy a large extent of Neolithic and Early Bronze Age activity defined so far, that most probably represents settlement located with an interesting relationship to the surrounding long barrows and associated monuments to which I have previously referred.

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3 May 2019