

**Application by Highways England for an Order Granting Development Consent for the A303
Amesbury to Berwick Down (Stonehenge) scheme**

Draft Archaeological Mitigation Strategy

Written submission by Andrew Fitzpatrick: ID: 20018342

Introduction

I am an archaeological consultant and have worked in commercial practice for over 25 years. I have extensive experience of the preparation and implementation of archaeological mitigation strategies for highways projects. I have also been responsible for excavations adjacent to the World Heritage Site, at Amesbury, in which internationally important finds directly relevant to Stonehenge were made. I am an Honorary Research Professor at the University of Leicester and a member of Highways England's Scientific Committee for the proposed scheme. Details of my competency to comment on the Draft Archaeological Mitigation Strategy are appended at the end of this submission.

Stonehenge and the A303

Cultural heritage issues, and in particular archaeological ones, have had a key role in the many proposals to improve the A303 between Amesbury and Berwick Down over the last 20 years. Those issues have been rehearsed and reviewed many times and they have informed the proposals for this scheme.

There is still no consensus amongst archaeologists about how to proceed. Some object to the current scheme because part of the scheme is within a World Heritage Site but few would deny that the proposals would deliver significant benefits to the cultural heritage. While cultural heritage is a major issue in the design, it is only one of a wide range of matters that must be weighed in the balance, individually, and collectively.

In my experience, no other highways project in England has afforded such detailed and thorough attention to archaeological issues or been subject to such detailed scrutiny.

Draft Archaeological Mitigation Strategy

The quality of the work that lies behind the strategy should be recognised. So should the care taken in the design to avoid, insofar as is possible, negative impacts on archaeological sites and their

setting. The tunnel is, evidently, the most prominent aspect of this and building it would be significantly more expensive than an at grade design. But archaeological issues have also been afforded priority elsewhere, such as in the proposed relocation of the Longbarrow junction and the sympathetic lighting of it, and in the design of the landscaping of the arisings of tunnel in the Till valley, which minimises impact on archaeological sites outside the World Heritage Site. Temporary works such as construction compounds that can have permanent impacts on archaeological remains have also been carefully designed to avoid this. In all, the scheme would deliver significant benefits to the settings of the monuments for which the World Heritage Site was inscribed.

Some archaeological remains will be directly impacted by the proposed scheme. In my judgement, if they were not within the World Heritage Site they would be dealt with routinely within the planning system with little comment. However, those remains have properly been ascribed a greater significance because of their association with those monuments, and that is reflected in the scale of work proposed in the mitigation strategy.

Conclusion

Some aspects of the Draft Archaeological Mitigation Strategy will be argued over. But in many ways those arguments are proxies for a debate between idealism and a realism. What can be fairly said is that Highways England have afforded cultural heritage, and archaeology in particular, the highest importance in their design and in their Draft Archaeological Mitigation Strategy.

Some years ago, the Society of Antiquaries of London, organised a meeting to discuss a previous iteration of the proposed scheme. The meeting was chaired by the then president of the society, a distinguished scholar who, while not an archaeologist, was familiar with trying to find a way forward in comparable situations. At one point they felt compelled to remind the meeting that sometimes the best can be the enemy of the good.

In my opinion, the Draft Archaeological Mitigation Strategy for the proposed scheme is not just good. It is very good.

Andrew Fitzpatrick

About Andrew Fitzpatrick

I have a first degree and PhD in Archaeology from the University of Durham and I am a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of London for whom I have served on their Council, Executive, and Research Committee. I have been a Member of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists since 1990 and I was made a Visiting Professor by Leicester University in 2011.

For many years I worked for a leading heritage practice based in in Salisbury during which time I led the team responsible for transport projects. The team prepared cultural heritage chapters for Environmental Impact Assessments, prepared mitigation strategies, and managed major archaeological fieldwork programmes in advance of construction. I acted as consultant to highways projects in England and France and was directly responsible for major fieldwork projects in advance of highways projects in Devon, Kent, Sussex and the West Midlands. Closer to Stonehenge, my fieldwork teams found the burials of some of the people who lived at the time of Stonehenge - the Amesbury Archer and the Boscombe Bowmen – for which they were awarded a British Archaeological Award. I have contributed to international conferences, publications and media programmes on the significance of these discoveries.

I have served on the Stonehenge World Heritage Site Advisory Forum, the Avebury World Heritage Site Working Group, the Wiltshire Archaeological Committee and the Avebury World Heritage Site Archaeological and Historical Research Group. I contributed to the Stonehenge and Avebury Research Framework and the South West Archaeological Research Framework, for which I was a Team Leader. I wrote the project design for the Stonehenge and Avebury World Heritage Site Research Framework and facilitated the public consultation for it, and prepared a Research Framework for Stonehenge for English Heritage.

I am a member of Highways England's Scientific Committee in which capacity I have seen the Draft Archaeological Mitigation Strategy develop and benefit from careful scrutiny and robust challenges.