

ENGLISH HERITAGE

**ADDITIONAL WRITTEN REPRESENTATION (DEADLINE 8a)
ON BEHALF OF ENGLISH HERITAGE TRUST (EHT) TO THE
EXAMINING AUTHORITY (ExA)**

Re: Application by

**Highways England for an Order granting Development Consent for the
A303 Amesbury to Berwick Down**

PINS Reference No: TR010025

I Introduction

- 1.1 The following note has been prepared by EHT for the examination of HE application for a Development Consent Order (DCO) for the A303 from Amesbury to Berwick Down which currently runs very close to Stonehenge.
- 1.2 This additional written representation covers the following points:
- a. Accompanied site visit to the Stonehenge Visitor Centre 29th August 2019

2 The Visit – Stonehenge Visitor Centre

- 2.1 *The Examiners and other interested parties were welcomed to the Stonehenge Visitor Centre by Kate Logan, Stonehenge Director and Heather Sebire, Senior Curator Stonehenge.*
- 2.2 *Compulsory site briefing and introductory remarks were given by the Applicant and Planning Inspectorate.*
- 2.3 English Heritage manages and conserves Stonehenge and opened the award-winning new Visitor Centre in 2013.
- 2.4 Before then the former facilities for visitors at Stonehenge were not fit for purpose.
- 2.5 After many years of planning the Stonehenge Environmental Improvements Project (SEIP) was initiated and new Visitor facilities were built at Airman's corner designed to sit as unobtrusively as possible in the contours of a dry valley.
- 2.6 The objectives of SEIP were to:
- **Improve the landscape setting** of Stonehenge, by reducing noise and visual intrusion from inappropriate structures and roads
 - Significantly **enhance the visitor experience** through the provision of improved, environmentally sustainable, visitor facilities
 - **Enhance the interpretation of the WHS** and improve access to selected monuments
 - **Enhance the education/ learning experience**, thereby improving understanding of the WHS
- 2.7 Stonehenge is one of Britain's best-known tourist destinations with over 1.5 million visitors a visiting last year, many of whom are from overseas. Currently there are around 60,000 free educational visits per annum.

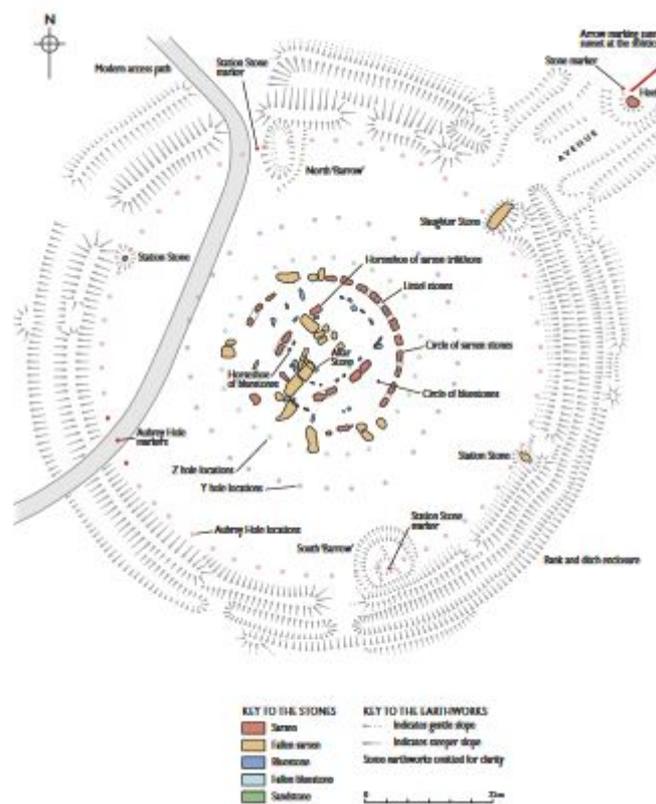
3 The Visit - Stonehenge Monument

- 3.1 *The Examiners and other interested parties travelled from the Stonehenge Visitor Centre to the Stonehenge monument. The view of the Cursus, Cursus barrows and other landscape features to the north of the Stonehenge monument field were taken before the group moved to the Heel stone and then into the centre of the monument before heading to the south of the monument field to take in the views south of the Stonehenge monument.*
- 3.2 *Heather Sebire, Senior Curator Stonehenge provided a brief history of the construction of Stonehenge and explained that the monument is aligned with the solstice alignment. See section 4 for summary.*
- 3.3 As part of SEIP, the landscape north of the stones was opened up with the removal of the old visitor facilities –which had famously described as a national disgrace – and the closing and grassing over of the A344 road which ran adjacent to the monument. These improvements made a dramatic difference to visitors’ understanding and enjoyment of Stonehenge, and greatly improved the atmosphere of the site.
- 3.4 The old visitor facilities near the Stones have now been taken away. It has been possible to stop up the smaller road –the A344- that ran by the Heel Stone but not the A303 to date. This is now grassed over and forms part of the visitor route around the monument. The top of the Avenue is also now reunited with the Stone circle. This is a huge improvement.
- 3.5 However the A303 still runs close to the south of the stone circle.
- 3.6 The World Heritage site of Stonehenge, Avebury and Associated Sites was inscribed by UNESCO in 1986 for its complexes of outstanding prehistoric monuments.
- 3.7 The importance of Stonehenge is perhaps best captured within the vision included in the WHS Management Plan: *“The Stonehenge World Heritage Site is globally important not just for Stonehenge, but for its unique and dense concentration of outstanding prehistoric monuments and sites, which together form a landscape without parallel.”*
- 3.8 Within the Stonehenge part of the WHS there are sites that are earlier than Stonehenge and sites that are later.
- 3.9 The sites earlier than Stonehenge include: The Stonehenge Cursus and Neolithic Long Barrow and the Winterbourne Stoke Long Barrow cemetery.

- 3.10 At the time of Stonehenge is the complex monument that is the Stonehenge stone circle, and also the Avenue, Woodhenge, and Durrington Walls henge and settlement.
- 3.11 The later sites include the Normanton Down barrow group and numerous other Bronze Age burial mounds and cemeteries forming the greatest concentration known in the UK.
- 3.12 The iconic stone circle of Stonehenge therefore does not sit in isolation but is part of a very complex prehistoric landscape.

4 History of the site

- 4.1 It is possible that features such as the Heel Stone and the low mound known as the North Barrow were early components of Stonehenge but the earliest known major event was the construction of a circular ditch with an inner and outer bank, built about 3000 BC. This enclosed an area about 100 metres in diameter, and had two entrances. It was an early form of henge monument.



- 4.2 Within the bank and ditch were possibly some timber structures and set just inside the bank were 56 pits, known as the Aubrey Holes. There has been much debate about what stood in these holes: the consensus for many years has been that they held upright timber posts, but recently the idea has re-emerged that some of them may have held stones. Within and around the Aubrey Holes, and also in the ditch, people buried cremations. About 64 cremations have been found, and perhaps as many as 150 individuals were originally buried at Stonehenge, making it the largest late Neolithic cemetery in the British Isles.
- 4.3 In about 2500 BC the stones were set up in the centre of the monument. Two types of stone are used at Stonehenge – the larger sarsens and the smaller ‘bluestones’. The sarsens were erected in two concentric arrangements – an inner horseshoe and an outer circle – and the bluestones were set up between them in a double arc.
- 4.4 Probably at the same time that the stones were being set up in the centre of the monument, the sarsens close to the entrance were raised, together with the four Station Stones on the periphery.
- 4.5 About 200 or 300 years later the central bluestones were rearranged to form a circle and inner oval (which was again later altered to form a horseshoe). The earthwork Avenue was also built at this time, connecting Stonehenge with the river Avon.
- 4.6 One of the last prehistoric activities at Stonehenge was the digging around the stone settings of two rings of concentric pits, the so-called Y and Z holes, radiocarbon dated by antlers within them to between 1800 and 1500 BC. They may have been intended for a rearrangement of the stones that was never completed. The stone settings at Stonehenge were built at a time of great change in prehistory, just as new styles of ‘Beaker’ pottery and the knowledge of metalworking, together with a transition to the burial of individuals with grave goods, were arriving from the Continent. From about 2400 BC, well-furnished Beaker graves such as that of the Amesbury Archer are found nearby.
- 4.7 In the early Bronze Age, one of the greatest concentrations of round barrows in Britain was built in the area around Stonehenge. Many barrow groups appear to have been deliberately located on hilltops visible from Stonehenge itself, such as those on King Barrow Ridge and the particularly rich burials at the Normanton Down cemetery.
- 4.8 Four of the sarsens at Stonehenge were adorned with hundreds of carvings depicting axe-heads and a few daggers. They appear to be bronze axes of the Arretton Down type, dating from about 1750–1500 BC. Perhaps these axes were a symbol of power or status within early Bronze Age society, or were related in some way to nearby round barrow burials.

5 Conservation and Management

- 5.1 One of EH's major roles is to conserve Stonehenge which is in guardianship for the nation. The Senior Curator works very closely with the Landscape Manager and other colleagues to ensure the monument is managed and conserved appropriately.
- 5.2 In 2012 a laser scan was taken of every stone primarily to inform parts of the new exhibition at the VC but this is also a very good management tool. There is a record of all the faces of every stone, all the tool marks and evidence of working are recorded along with all the early and modern graffiti. As technology advances this exercise can be repeated which will give a comparative record of any damage or wear and tear to the stones.
- 5.3 Many of the stones are covered with lichens which were surveyed in 2003 when 77 different species growing on the stones were found, several of which are nationally rare or scarce. The lichen types at Stonehenge are broadly similar to those at the nearby stone circle at Avebury, but with some interesting exceptions. Two new species were found in a more recent survey in 2017 which indicates that the lichens are thriving.
- 5.4 Much of the conservation revolves around grass management. The outer area of what is called the monument field is grazed with sheep but they do not roam over the stone circle itself. Visitors enjoy complete circulation around the monument partly on grass paths and there is a Special Access facility which allows smaller groups of visitors who have pre-booked to enter the circle itself.

For further information please see

<https://www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/stonehenge/>

Kate Logan

Heather Sebire

September 2019