

12 November 2009

Department of Community Services  
Wiltshire & Swindon History Centre  
Cocklebury Road  
Chippenham  
Wiltshire  
SN15 3QN  
Your ref: S/2009/1527/FULL and  
S/2009/1528/LBC  
Our ref: MPK/NJD/09MPK263

Head of Development Services  
Development Services  
61 Wyndham Road  
Salisbury  
Wiltshire  
SP1 3AH  
**FAO: Mr Adam Madge**

Dear Mr Madge

**With reference to:**  
**Stonehenge Environmental Improvements**  
**Planning Applications S/2009/1527/FULL and S/2009/1528/LBC**

Thank you for the consultations on these applications dated 19<sup>th</sup> October.

#### General Comments

I understand that the scheme will deliver substantial environmental benefits for Stonehenge WHS and is in keeping with the aims and policies in the 2009 Stonehenge WHS Management Plan. The removal of existing facilities and the A344 in particular, will significantly improve the setting of Stonehenge, the Avenue and other monuments in the vicinity. However, the removal of the A303 should still be a long term aim to complete the improvements. I agree with the conclusion of the Environmental Statement that the benefits of the scheme do outweigh the 'disbenefits'. The new facilities on the whole have been designed in a way that minimise their impact on the attributes of Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the WHS.

An extensive phase programme of archaeological investigation has been undertaken across the areas of the site affected by the proposed scheme. This has included desk assessment and surveys. At Airman's Corner, this included trial trenching and hand dug test pits. The archaeological evaluation and investigations and the resultant Environmental Statement do provide the Archaeology Service with adequate information to make a response on the planning application.

#### Buried Archaeology

An archaeological mitigation and recording strategy has been prepared as part of the Environmental Statement (Appendix A.5.8). The strategy identifies a number of mitigation measures in various locations related to the construction phase of development works. The measures will include watching briefs, excavation and recording work. The mitigation strategy is adequate and will need to be implemented by means of a planning condition. A number of separate Written Schemes of Investigation for the mitigation measures will have to be approved by this Service prior to work commencing.

I suggest that Wiltshire Council condition WL26 is used:

No development shall commence within the application area until:

- a) A written programme of archaeological investigation, which should include on-site work and off-site work such as the analysis, publishing and archiving of the results, has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority; and
- b) The approved programme of archaeological work has been carried out in accordance with the approved details.

#### Visual Impact on Extant Monuments

Although the scheme has been designed to minimise adverse impacts on the attributes of OUV, there will be some adverse visual impact on some key monument groups within the WHS which express attributes of OUV. The visual envelope of the proposed visitor centre and car park at Airman's corner, the Greater Cursus and barrows, the Lesser Curses and barrows, and the barrows on the north side of the Winterbourne Stoke Group.

It is likely that the building will be present for the medium to long term. The visual impact on the above monuments of what is a substantial new building needs to be mitigated further. The landscape setting and landscaping strategy could be modified to reduce the impact of the new building. The potential adverse impact on the setting of key monuments of proposed street lighting in the new car park and at the Long Barrow roundabout and at Airman's Corner needs careful consideration and mitigation.

Yours sincerely

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County Archaeologist

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