

West of Waterlooville MDA, Hampshire: Phase 02, 04, 05, 08 & 13 Mitigation Works: Post-excavation Assessment and Overarching Updated Project Design

This is a good, well written Post-Excavation Assessment and Updated Project Design report, which provides a comprehensive summary of the stratigraphic evidence obtained and contains excellent specialist assessments and a statement of potential arising from these. The report also integrates well information from the previous assessment reports compiled for this MDA. We are pleased to confirm that we are happy with the Updated Project Design and the proposals for further analysis, dating and publication set out within the report.

Although we have no substantive comments on this report, we do have a few minor comments and requests for additional clarifying information and a further illustration (as detailed below). However we suggest that these can be submitted as a separate addendum / letter, rather than revising / resubmitting the entire report.

Specific comments:

Does the possible pyre-related debris (para. 6.11.1) require further analysis / consideration during the analysis phase?

A comment on the Phase 2 PXA (Wessex Archaeology ref. 65804.02 Nov 2013) related to the question of the potential use of some of the enclosures / ditch systems for stock enclosures rather than settlement (principally based on the lack of artefactual material), and was there was any potential for geochemical analysis of samples to ascertain this (e.g. phosphate). Has this been considered?

Could you confirm as soon as practical who the external specialist (wood charcoal) and the peer reviewer will be (Table 12). This could be given in a progress update at the appropriate time in the analysis / publication project.

Re Section 10.3 – it would be useful to pass on details of the final retention / discard proposals so that this information can be detailed in the respective HER's.

Figures:

An additional plan illustrating the plan, excavation grid and distribution of the Mesolithic flints and burnt flint (as well as the ridge across the middle of the base) from tree-throw hollow 71219 (section 5.9) would be useful.

Whilst it would have been useful to show the excavation slots and recuts in relevant figures, we don't see the need to revise the figures at this stage. Similarly, although Fig 20 is not fully coloured, the phasing can be established from the text, so again we see no need to reissue this.

Condition discharge

As discussed, the project duration is projected to take 2-3 years from commencement and we note that work on the analysis can commence as soon as Wessex have been commissioned.

Following the submission and approval of the additional information requested above, we are content that the archaeological conditions attached to the Winchester City Council and Havant Borough Council planning permissions (Condition 10) could be discharged upon receipt of a letter confirming that resources for this project through to its completion have been secured. This should also include confirmation of the date of commencement of this project, a project timeframe / schedule and the identification of key project stages for monitoring purposes.

In addition to this letter, the applications to both LPA's to discharge the archaeological conditions should be accompanied by copies of the PXA / UPD and the additional information requested above (following its approval), together with a copy of the formal transfer of the title of all finds to the museum (HCT).