



## Ropley Primary School, Church Street Ropley, Alresford, Hampshire

Archaeological Watching Brief Report





**ROPLEY PRIMARY SCHOOL, CHURCH STREET, ROPLEY,  
ALRESFORD, HAMPSHIRE**

**Archaeological Watching Brief Report**

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**Watching Brief Report**

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**QUALITY ASSURANCE**

SITE CODE	<b>77730</b>	ACCESSION CODE		CLIENT CODE	
PLANNING APPLICATION REF.	<b>23200/012</b>	NGR		<b>464484 131869</b>	

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**ROPLEY PRIMARY SCHOOL, CHURCH STREET, ROPLEY,  
ALRESFORD, HAMPSHIRE**

**Watching Brief Report**

**Summary**

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Hampshire County Council Property Services to undertake an archaeological watching brief at Ropley Primary School, Church Street, Ropley, Alresford. The watching brief was required as a condition of planning approval for proposed sewage, electrical and drainage improvements within the school grounds, centred on NGR 464484 131869.

The fieldwork was carried out on the 29<sup>th</sup> of July 2011. The watching brief monitored all stripping and excavations during the first phase of works (excavation of new sewer plant and building). The works revealed no archaeological features but did encounter evidence of previous modern drainage and fencing works. The works also revealed that the Site had been landscaped with the southern end of the site substantially built up to achieve a level ground surface to the playing field.

Before the commencement of the second phase of works (installation of shallow drainage) discussion has held with the Hampshire County Council Archaeological Officer. On the basis of the results from the first phase of watching brief, the relatively shallow impact from the proposed works and the low potential for any archaeological remains, it was decided by the Hampshire County Council Archaeological Officer that the second phase of works would not need to be monitored.

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ALRESFORD, HAMPSHIRE**

**Watching Brief Report**

**Acknowledgements**

This project was commissioned by Hampshire County Council Property Services and Wessex Archaeology is grateful to them and Gordon Pullinger in this regard. Wessex Archaeology would also like to thank Hannah Fluck (the Hampshire County Council Archaeological Historic Environment Officer) who monitored the project on behalf of Hampshire County Council, and Gerry Machola of A. Machola Limited for his assistance throughout the course of the works.

The fieldwork was carried out by Moi Watson. The project was managed for Wessex Archaeology by Andy Manning. This report was compiled by Matt Kendall. The specialist finds report was written by Lorraine Mephram and the illustrations were compiled by Kenneth Lymer.

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**ROPLEY PRIMARY SCHOOL, CHURCH STREET, ROPLEY,  
ALRESFORD, HAMPSHIRE****Watching Brief Report****1 INTRODUCTION****1.1 Project Background**

1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Hampshire County Council Property Services to undertake an archaeological watching brief at Ropley Primary School, Church Street, Ropley, Alresford (hereafter 'the Site') centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 464484 131869 (see **Figure 1**)

1.1.2 Planning consent (Ref. 23200/012) was granted by Hampshire County Council (HCC) for sewage, electrical and drainage improvements at Ropley Primary School. Since the Site lies immediately adjacent to the historic village core, following consultation with the Hampshire County Council Archaeological Officer, an archaeological condition (No. 2) was attached to the planning permission requiring the implementation of a programme of archaeological monitoring and recording in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation.

1.1.3 The proposed improvements include two phases of groundworks. These works comprised:

**Phase 1:** Surface strip to the top of the natural geology of the new sewage treatment area (approximately a total maximum area 13m by 3m) and the area of the base of the new storage building (approximately 12m by 4m)

**Phase 2** Excavation of field drainage system

1.1.4 Due to the archaeological potential of the Site, it was required that an archaeological watching brief be carried out to monitor all ground works associated with the development, to ensure that the archaeological interest of the Site was properly safeguarded and recorded. A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) was prepared by Wessex Archaeology and approved by the Hampshire County Council Archaeological Officer in advancement of the monitoring (Wessex Archaeology 2011).

**1.2 Scope of Investigation**

1.2.1 The Site lies immediately adjacent to the defined limits of the historic village core, which has been designated as an Area of High Archaeological Potential on the Hampshire Archaeology and Historic Buildings Record (Hampshire AHBR). Thus it was concluded that there was the potential for a significant impact on any potential archaeological remains, if present.

**1.3 Site location, topography and geology**

1.3.1 The Site lies in the centre of the village of Ropley; situated 3.5 miles east of New Alresford. The Site is situated south of the school building in a triangle of land boarded by Church Lane to the south-east, School Lane to the west,

and Church Street to the north. The site lies at a height of 122m above Ordnance Datum (aOD) and is generally level, although this may be a result of modern levelling.

- 1.3.2 The underlying geology of the Site is mapped as Upper Chalk (British Geological Survey 1957).

#### **1.4 Archaeological background**

- 1.4.1 The Hampshire AHBR recorded a total of 18 archaeological sites and 30 historic buildings within a 500m radius of the Ropley Primary School. The majority of the recorded archaeological sites comprised of undated hollow-ways, earthworks, field systems and enclosures, which are largely located to the east and southwest of the village.

- 1.4.2 With the exception of a single Palaeolithic hand axe (Hampshire AHBR **59613**) found just to the north of the Site, no firmly dated pre-medieval remains have been found in close proximity to the Site. However, an Iron Age gold torque was found close to Lyewood House, approximately 700m to the east of the Site.

- 1.4.3 The village of Ropley appears to have had its origins in the late Anglo-Saxon period and was included in the Domesday Book (1086) under its original name of *Sudtone*. The first documented use of the name *Ropley* appearing in the late 12<sup>th</sup> century (Ekwall 1991).

- 1.4.4 Very little archaeological investigation has been undertaken within the village although it was included as part of the RCHME Medieval settlement project which identified the core of the historic village (Hampshire AHBR **41235**). The majority of the listed buildings are late post-medieval and early modern buildings and are situated either within the historic village core or along Petersfield Road/ South Road to the south of the village.

- 1.4.5 The Site lies just outside the core of the historic village, situated to the southwest of the 13<sup>th</sup> century St Peters Church.

## **2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

- 2.1.1 With due regard to the *IfA Standards and Guidance for archaeological watching brief* (IfA 2008), the generic aims of the project was defined as;

- To enable the preservation by record of any archaeological features or deposits uncovered and to establish the extent (where possible), date, character, relationship, condition and significance of surviving archaeological features, artefacts and deposits within the area to be impacted by construction work
- Where significant archaeological remains or deposits are identified, to inform discussions on the final extent and scope of the required archaeological mitigation
- To place any identified archaeological remains within their context.



- 2.1.2 The principal aim of the watching brief was to provide further information concerning the presence/absence, date, nature and extent of any buried archaeological remains and to investigate and record all archaeological features revealed during groundwork.

### **3 METHODOLOGY**

- 3.1.1 All groundwork associated with the first phase of groundwork which impacted undisturbed ground was monitored. The groundwork was carried out, under constant archaeological supervision, using a 360° tracked excavator fitted with a toothless grading bucket.
- 3.1.2 The mechanical excavation proceeded in spits to the top of the natural geology (Upper Chalk). The machine excavated arisings were stored in a centralised location and were scanned for artefacts at regular intervals.
- 3.1.3 All potential archaeological features and deposits were subsequently hand cleaned and sample excavated as per the methodology set out in the WSI (Wessex Archaeology 2011). Features and deposits were recorded using Wessex Archaeology's *pro forma* record sheets and a unique numbering system for individual contexts, and were planned at a scale of 1:20. Sections were drawn at 1:10. All principal strata and features were related to the Ordnance Survey datum. The monitored areas were located using a Leica GPS survey system. Following all investigation and recording, the areas were then backfilled.
- 3.1.4 A photographic record of the watching brief was maintained through digital images. The photographic record illustrated both the detail and general context of the archaeological remains revealed, and the Site as a whole.

### **4 FIELDWORK RESULTS**

#### **4.1 Deposit Sequence**

- 4.1.1 The Site was covered with a mid greyish brown silty clay turf and topsoil which was used as the playing fields for the school and had a uniform depth of 0.16m. The topsoil overlay a mid brown clay silt made ground layer which contained occasional sub-angular flint components and varied in depth across the Site with it being thicker in the southern half of the Site than in the north.
- 4.1.2 This made ground sealed the natural geology of Upper Chalk which sloped gradually to the southern end of the stripped area (**Plate 1**) with the depth of the geology at the northern end measuring 121.84m aOD and at the southern end 120.97m aOD, a decrease of just over a metre.

#### **4.2 Archaeological Features**

- 4.2.1 No archaeological features were identified during the first phase of groundworks but there were three areas of modern disturbance contexts (**004**, **006**, and **008**) relating to modern drainage and fencing, summarised in **Appendix 1**.

## 5 FINDS

- 5.1.1 Finds were recovered only from the uppermost turf and topsoil (context **002**) and comprised three pieces of ceramic building material (brick and tile), one sherd of pottery (glazed red earthenware), a decorated clay tobacco pipe stem fragment, and part of a decorative plated metal object, possibly a candelabrum. All these items are of post-medieval date and have not been retained.

## 6 ENVIRONMENTAL SAMPLES

- 6.1.1 No material suitable for environmental analysis was present within the monitored areas.

## 7 CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1.1 The archaeological watching brief during the first phase of groundworks uncovered no archaeological features, but did encounter a number of features which were caused by modern disturbance from drainage improvements and previous land use.
- 7.1.2 The sloping gradient of the natural geology in relation to the level ground surface shows that at some point the ground level was raised using made-ground to produce a level area for the schools playing fields.
- 7.1.3 The WSI stated that there is a second phase of works planned on the site dealing with the excavation of drainage trenches which would be undertaken at a later date. Due to the shallow depth of these drainage trenches (approximately a maximum depth of 0.60m and the increased depth of the natural chalk geology, it was decided after consultation with the Hampshire County Council Archaeological Officer that the drainage trenches posed no risk to any potential archaeology and the works would not need to be monitored.

## 8 ARCHIVE

### 8.1 Preparation and Deposition

- 8.1.1 The archive is currently held at Wessex Archaeology's office building under the site code **77730**. The complete archaeological project archive will be prepared in accordance with Wessex Archaeology's Guidelines for Archive Preparation and in accordance with *Archaeological Archives: a guide to best practice in creation, compilation, transfer and curation* (AAF 2007).
- 8.1.2 At a later date, the archive will be deposited with the Hampshire County Council Museum Service under the site code **77730**. The archive will be prepared in accordance with the Museum's archive preparation standards.

### 8.2 The Archive

- 8.2.1 The project archive was prepared in accordance with the guidelines outlined in Appendix 3 of *Management of Archaeological Projects* (English Heritage 1991) and in accordance with the *Guidelines for the preparation of excavation archives for long term storage* (UKIC 1990). It comprises a ring-

bound file containing a watching brief attendance form, site 'day book', trench record sheets, photographic register and *Written Scheme of Investigation*.

### **8.3 Copyright**

- 8.3.1 This report may contain material that is non-Wessex Archaeology copyright (e.g. Ordnance Survey, British Geological Survey), or the intellectual property of third parties, which we are able to provide for limited reproduction under the terms of our own copyright licences, but for which copyright itself is non-transferrable by Wessex Archaeology. You are reminded that you remain bound by the conditions of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 with regard to multiple copying and electronic dissemination of the report.

## **9 REFERENCES**

Ekwall, E., 1991, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Place-names*, 4<sup>th</sup> edition, Clarendon Press, 392

Geological Survey of England and Wales, 1957, *Alresford*, Drift Geology. Sheet 300 1:63,360

IfA, 2008, *Standards and guidance: for an archaeological watching brief*

Wessex Archaeology, 2011, Ropley Primary School, Church Street, Ropley, Alresford, Hampshire, *Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Watching Brief*, Unpublished Client Report ref. 77703.01, May 2011

## APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT SUMMARY TABLE

Context	Description	
101	<i>Cut</i>	Stripped area during the first phase of groundworks
102	<i>Layer</i>	Turf/topsoil – Mid greyish brown silty clay containing sparse sub-angular flint (<0.05m) and post-medieval artefacts.
103	<i>Layer</i>	Made ground – Mid brown clay silt containing occasional sub-angular flint (<0.09m). Built up to level the area around the Site and is of probable post-medieval date. Also fills <b>008</b> .
104	<i>Cut</i>	Part of a soakaway associated with a drain situated 0.20m away from the north-north-western edge of the stripped area.
105	<i>Fill</i>	Redeposited chalk backfill of <b>104</b> .
106	<i>Cut</i>	Cut of a trench used for an old fence line – concrete pads for the posts visible in the base of the feature.
107	<i>Fill</i>	Fill of <b>106</b> . Mid to dark brown silt containing occasional sub-angular flint and modern brick inclusions.
108	<i>Cut</i>	Modern drainage trench built in 1973 which was later realigned and possibly associated with the school's swimming pool. Infilled with 003.
109	<i>Layer</i>	A natural depression in the natural geology which had been filled up with 003.
110	<i>Layer</i>	Natural geology – degraded Upper Chalk.

## APPENDIX 2: OASIS FORM

**OASIS ID: wessexar1-108262**

### Project details

Project name	Ropley Primary School, Ropley, Hampshire
Short description of the project	Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Hampshire County Council Property Services to undertake an archaeological watching brief at Ropley Primary School, Church Street, Ropley, Alresford. The watching brief was required as a condition of planning approval for proposed sewage, electrical and drainage improvements within the school grounds, centred on NGR 464484 131869. The fieldwork was carried out on the 29th of July 2011. The watching brief monitored all stripping and excavations during the first phase of works (excavation of new sewer plant and building). The works revealed no archaeological features but did encounter evidence of previous modern drainage and fencing works. The works also revealed that the Site had been landscaped with the southern end of the site substantially built up to achieve a level ground surface to the playing field. Before the commencement of the second phase of works (installation of shallow drainage) discussion has held with the Hampshire County Council Archaeological Officer. On the basis of the results from the first phase of watching brief, the relatively shallow impact from the proposed works and the low potential for any archaeological remains, it was decided by the Hampshire County Council Archaeological Officer that the second phase of works would not need to be monitored.
Project dates	Start: 29-07-2011 End: 29-07-2011
Previous/future work	No / No
Any associated project reference codes	77730 - Contracting Unit No.
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	None
Current Land use	Community Service 2 - Leisure and recreational buildings
Monument type	NONE None
Significant Finds	NONE None
Investigation type	'Watching Brief'
Prompt	Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPG16

### Project location

Country	England
Site location	HAMPSHIRE EAST HAMPSHIRE ROPLEY Ropley Primary School
Postcode	SO24 0DS
Study area	1.00 Hectares
Site coordinates	SU 644 318 51.0813687913 -1.080518075990 51 04 52 N 001 04

49 W Point  
Height OD / Depth Min: 121.00m Max: 122.00m

### Project creators

Name of Wessex Archaeology  
Organisation  
Project originator brief City/Nat. Park/District/Borough archaeologist  
Project design Wessex Archaeology  
originator  
Project director/manager Andrew Manning  
Project supervisor Moi Watson  
Type of Developer  
sponsor/funding body  
Name of Hampshire County Council Property Services  
sponsor/funding body

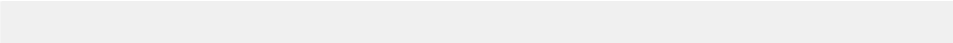
### Project archives

Physical Archive No  
Exists?  
Digital Archive Hampshire County Museums Service  
recipient  
Digital Media 'Images raster / digital photography','Survey','Text'  
available  
Paper Archive Hampshire County Museums Service  
recipient  
Paper Contents 'none'  
Paper Media 'Report','Context sheet','Notebook - Excavation',' Research','  
available General Notes'

### Project bibliography 1

Publication type Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)  
Title Ropley Primary School, Church Street, Ropley, Alresford,  
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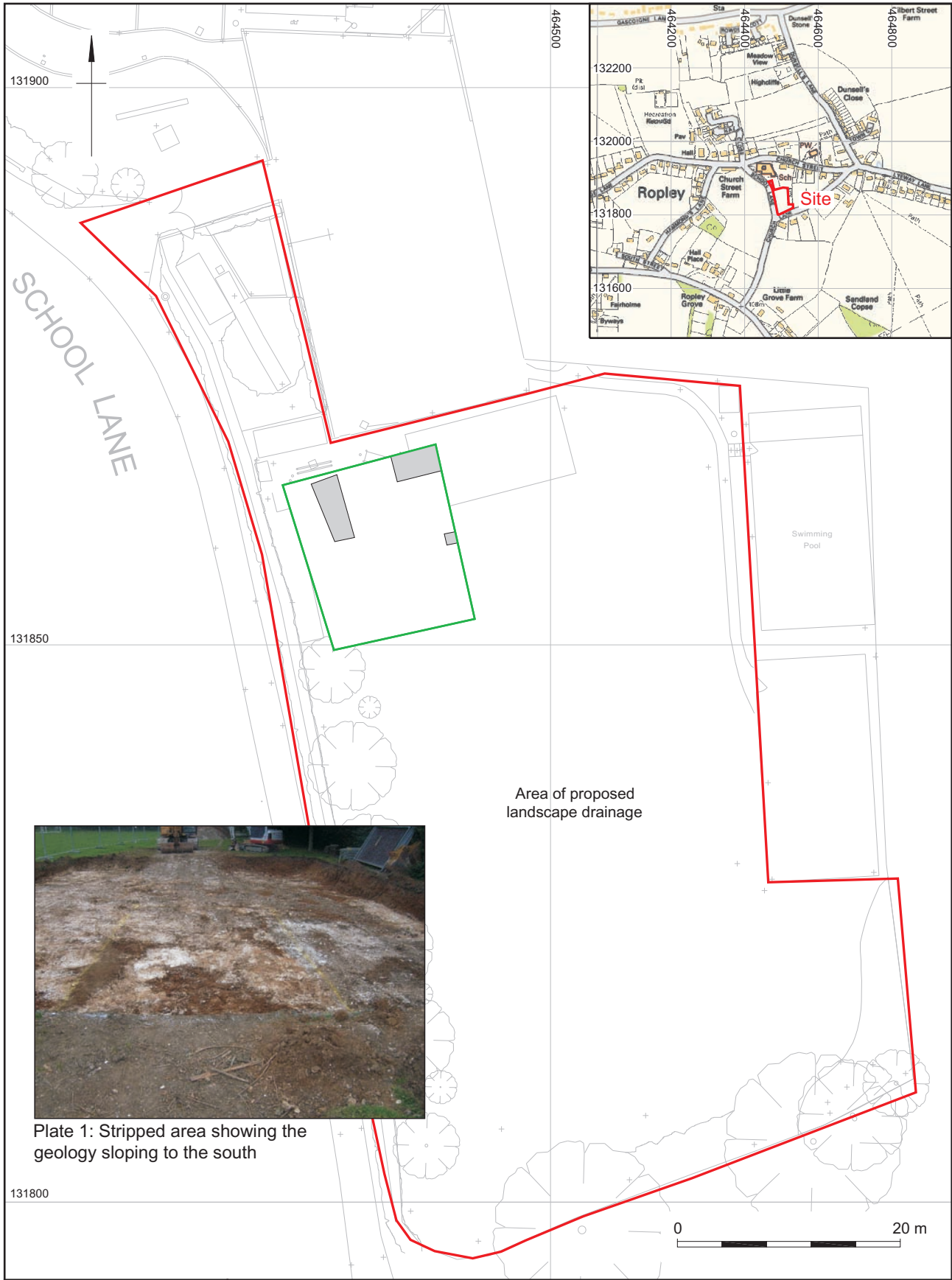



Plate 1: Stripped area showing the geology sloping to the south

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><span style="color: red;">□</span> Site</li> <li><span style="color: green;">□</span> Strip area (watching brief)</li> <li><span style="background-color: grey; border: 1px solid black; display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px;"></span> Modern disturbance</li> </ul> 	<p>Contains Ordnance Survey Street View open data © Crown Copyright and database right 2010.          Digital survey data supplied by the Client.          This material is for client report only © Wessex Archaeology. No unauthorised reproduction.</p>	
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Site location and watching brief area

Figure 1





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