



Lend Lease Construction (EMEA) Limited  
RNAS Yeovilton  
Yeovilton, Somerset

Archaeological Watching Brief Report



**LEND LEASE CONSTRUCTION (EMEA) LIMITED,  
RNAS YEOVILTON,  
YEOVILTON,  
SOMERSET**

**Archaeological Watching Brief Report**

Prepared for:  
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On behalf of:  
**Debut Services (South West)**

by  
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**August 2012**

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## QUALITY ASSURANCE

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|---------------------------|--------------|----------------|--|----------------------|--|
| SITE CODE                 | <b>86160</b> | ACCESSION CODE |  | CLIENT CODE          |  |
| PLANNING APPLICATION REF. |              | NGR            |  | <b>435488 124301</b> |  |

| VERSION | STATUS* | PREPARED BY | APPROVED BY | APPROVER'S SIGNATURE | DATE     | FILE                            |
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\* I= INTERNAL DRAFT E= EXTERNAL DRAFT F= FINAL

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**Archaeological Watching Brief Report**

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**Archaeological Watching Brief Report**

**Summary**

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Lend Lease Construction (EMEA) Limited on behalf Debut Services Limited to undertake an archaeological watching brief during geotechnical work at RNAS Yeovilton, Somerset.

The watching brief was required during the excavation of a series of hand and machine excavated geotechnical pits, which form part of a wider project to expand the wardroom complex within the northern part of the base.

A programme of previous archaeological work comprising geophysical survey, archaeological evaluation and archaeological excavation has already been undertaken within much of the Site. This work identified the presence of limited prehistoric and extensive Romano-British settlement and agricultural activity to the north and east of the site, and the presence of Romano-British boundary features within the site.

The area occupied by the site has been subjected to some degree of landscaping during the previous construction of the present wardroom complex.

No archaeological features or deposits were observed during the watching brief.

The groundwork's were conducted during July 2012.

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**Acknowledgements**

This project was commissioned by Lend Lease Construction (EMEA) Limited on behalf Debut Services Limited and Wessex Archaeology is grateful to Tamzin Wood in this regard. Thanks are also due to Greg Laycock of Debut Services for his assistance during the fieldwork.

The project was managed for Wessex Archaeology by Sue Farr. The fieldwork was conducted by Stephen Beach, who also researched and compiled this report.

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**Archaeological Watching Brief Report**

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Project Background**

1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Lend Lease Construction (EMEA) Limited on behalf Debut Services Limited to undertake an archaeological watching brief at RNAS Yeovilton, Ilchester, Yeovil, Somerset, BA22 8HL, centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 4354881 124301, hereafter referred to as 'the Site' (**Figure 1**).

1.1.2 An archaeological watching brief was required during the excavation of a series of hand and machine excavated geotechnical pits, which form part of a wider project to expand the wardroom complex within the northern part of the base.

1.1.3 The groundwork's were conducted during July 2012.

### **1.2 Site location, topography and geology**

1.2.1 RNAS Yeovilton lies in the Yeo Valley, c. 2.5km to the north-east of Ilchester (**Figure 1**). The Site was located on the north side of Heatcote Road (B3151), on an area of landscaped grass immediately north of the main wardroom complex.

1.2.2 The Site occupied a level area which had been landscaped with the addition of a series of linear mounds which separated the main wardroom complex from the north car park and garages. A further circular mound was also present within the north facing open fronted yard formed by the complex.

1.2.3 The Site was situated at c. 20.00m above Ordnance Datum (aOD).

1.2.4 The underlying geology is mapped as undifferentiated River Terrace Deposits overlying Lias Clay and Lower Lias Limestone of the Jurassic Period (OS Geological Survey Sheet 296). The overlying soils were calcareous and non-calcareous fine loamy soils over limestone gravel, with the water table lying very close to ground level.

## **2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

2.1.1 A programme of work comprising geophysical survey (Barker and Mercer 1999), archaeological evaluation (Wessex Archaeology 2000), and archaeological excavation (Lovell 2005) have already been conducted within much of the Site. This work identified the presence of field systems, drove-ways, enclosures, pits and graves consistent with settlement of Roman date (AD 43 to AD 410); the heaviest concentration of features being identified to the north and east of the Site.

2.1.2 In addition to the Romano-British activity, a Middle to Late Bronze Age (1600 BC to 700 BC) enclosure and ditches, and a Middle to Late Iron Age (c. 400 BC-AD 43) ditch and trackway, were identified to the south and east of the Site.

2.1.3 Post-medieval and modern features were consistent with agricultural activity only.

### **3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

3.1.1 A series of geological test pits were excavated within the Site to acquire data on the character and nature of the underlying deposits, to aid the design of foundations for the proposed building structure.

3.1.2 During these works an archaeological watching brief was maintained to determine the potential level of archaeological activity visible within the test pits and to preserve by record any archaeological features encountered, or if necessary to prevent damage to any major or significant archaeological features or deposits. The watching brief was also designed to record the level of disturbance and truncation caused by the previous building situated to the south of the Site, and to consider the potential for archaeological survival with the Site.

### **4 METHODOLOGY**

#### **4.1.1 Archaeological Watching Brief**

4.1.2 The watching brief was conducted in accordance with the Institute for Archaeologists *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* (IfA 2008).

4.1.3 A JCB type backhoe excavator equipped with a toothless 0.50m bucket were used to excavate trial pits TP 1, 2 and 3. Hand tools were used to excavate trial pits HD 1, 2 and 3.

4.1.4 The excavation of each trench was observed by a qualified professional archaeologist.

#### **4.1.5 On-Site Recording**

4.1.6 All the trial pits were recorded using Wessex Archaeology's *pro forma* recording system, and related to the Ordnance Survey national grid.

4.1.7 Each trench was assigned an individual number from TP 1 to TP 3 and HD 1 to HD 3, depending on the excavation technique deployed (see **Figure 1**).

4.1.8 A digital photographic record of each individual test pit was maintained using a digital camera of 12.1 megapixels resolution.

### **5 FIELDWORK RESULTS**

5.1.1 Trial pit descriptions and brief soil descriptions can be found in **Appendix 1**. The locations of each individual trench observed are depicted on **Figure 1**.



- 5.1.2 The trial pits were located in the northern and western portion of the previously excavated area. This part of the Site was occupied by a major late Romano-British boundary complex, comprising four roughly parallel north-west to south-east ditches, and a series of later agricultural features, such as ridge and furrow. The Site was situated away from the main concentrations of Romano-British settlement activity, which were situated to the north and east (Lovell 2005, pp 19-21).
- 5.1.3 No archaeological features or deposits, new or previously identified, were observed during this phase of excavation within the Site.
- 5.1.4 Trial pits TP 2, TP 3 and HD 1, 2 and 3 were situated on ground already investigated during the archaeological excavation. Only TP 1 being situated outside the area of previous investigation.
- 5.1.5 No archaeological features were identified with TP 1. The topsoil and subsoil layers encountered within this trial pit were relatively undisturbed, suggesting any landscaping undertaken during the construction of the present wardroom was rather limited adjacent to this trial pit.
- 5.1.6 Trial pit HD 1 was situated on the foundations of the northern wall of the present wardroom complex, and did not breach any undisturbed deposits.
- 5.1.7 Trials pits HD 2 and HD 3 were located on top of a linear landscaped bund constructed during the previous wardroom complex works. All deposits encountered within these trial pits were either redeposited, natural or not deep enough to reach archaeological sequences.

## **6 CONCLUSIONS**

- 6.1.1 No archaeological features or deposits were observed during the watching brief.
- 6.1.2 Within the scope of the groundwork, a limited level of modern truncation or disturbance caused by the construction of the present wardroom complex has reduced the potential for the survival of any archaeological features.
- 6.1.3 With the exception of the western portions of the Site, west of TP 1, the Site has previously been investigated by archaeological excavation.

## **7 ARCHIVE**

### **7.1 The Archive**

- 7.1.1 The complete site archive, which will include paper records and photographic records, will be prepared following the standard conditions for the acceptance of excavated archaeological material by Somerset Heritage Service, and in general following nationally recommended guidelines (Walker 1990; SMA 1995; Richards and Robinson 2000; Brown 2007).
- 7.1.2 All archive elements are marked with the site code (86160), and a full index has been prepared. The archive comprises the following:

- 
- 1 A4 File
  - Photographs

## **7.2 Copyright**

- 7.2.1 The full copyright of the written/illustrative archive relating to the Site will be retained by Wessex Archaeology Ltd under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 with all rights reserved. The recipient museum, however, will be granted an exclusive licence for the use of the archive for educational purposes, including academic research, providing that such use shall be non-profitmaking, and conforms with the Copyright and Related Rights regulations 2003.

## **7.3 Security Copy**

- 7.3.1 In line with current best practice, on completion of the project a security copy of the paper records will be prepared, in the form of microfilm. The master jackets and one diazo copy of the microfilm will be submitted to the National Archaeological Record (English Heritage), a second diazo copy will be deposited with the paper records, and a third diazo copy will be retained by Wessex Archaeology. Alternatively, the security copy may be in the form of a pdf file.

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## 8 REFERENCES

Barker, P.P., and Mercer, E.J.F., 1999, A Geophysical Survey Carried Out at RNAS Yeovilton, Somerset. Ref 1396

Institute for Archaeologists 2008 *Standards and Guidance for desk-based assessments*

Lovell, J. 2005 Excavation of a Romano-British Farmstead at RNAS Yeovilton, *Somerset Archaeology and Natural History*, Volume 149 (2005), pp 7-70

Wessex Archaeology 2000 New Wardroom Complex, RNAS Yeovilton, Ilchester, Somerset – Archaeological Field Evaluation, Unpublished Client Report Ref. 47511a

**APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT SUMMARY TABLE**

| Test Pit Number | TP 1  | NGR point | (centre                              | 354856 124288 |
|-----------------|---|-----------|--------------------------------------|---------------|
| Length (m)      | Width (m)   |           | Maximum depth below ground level (m) |               |
| 1.80            | 0.50  |           | 2.90                                 |               |
| Context Number  | Soil Description  |           | Depth below ground level (m)         |               |
| 101             | Turf Line/Topsoil – mid grey brown silty clay   |           | 0-0.14                               |               |
| 102             | Subsoil – Light yellow brown silty clay with inclusions of very small and sparse limestone rubble |           | 0.14-0.33                            |               |
| 103             | Light yellow brown clay with abundant small gravels and some grey-brown sand in matrix            |           | 0.33-0.90                            |               |
| 104             | Fine rounded small flint gravels with grey-brown sand matrix                                      |           | 0.90-1.40                            |               |
| 105             | Blue-grey lias clay with lamination appearing c.1.80m BGL. Becoming more rock like with depth     |           | 1.40→                                |               |

| Test Pit Number | TP 2   | NGR point | (centre                              | 354880 124293 |
|-----------------|--|-----------|--------------------------------------|---------------|
| Length (m)      | Width (m)  |           | Maximum depth below ground level (m) |               |
| 1.80            | 0.50   |           | 2.50                                 |               |
| Context Number  | Soil Description   |           | Depth below ground level (m)         |               |
| 201             | Turf Line/Topsoil – mid grey brown silty clay                        |           | 0-0.27                               |               |
| 202             | Red hardcore rubble mixed with mid to light brown topsoil            |           | 0.27-0.50                            |               |
| 203             | Gravels with a mid yellow brown sand matrix                          |           | 0.50-0.86                            |               |
| 204             | Light grey clay with yellow brown mottling and some gravelly patches |           | 0.86-0.96                            |               |
| 205             | Pale blue-grey clay with some gravels                                |           | 0.96-1.50                            |               |
| 206             | Dark blue-grey lias clay (laminated)                                 |           | 1.50→                                |               |

| Test Pit Number | TP 3   | NGR point) (centre                   | 354903 124306 |
|-----------------|--|--------------------------------------|---------------|
| Length (m)      | Width (m)  | Maximum depth below ground level (m) |               |
| 1.80            | 0.50   | 2.25                                 |               |
| Context Number  | Soil Description   | Depth below ground level (m)         |               |
| 301             | Turf Line/Topsoil – mid grey brown silty clay                        | 0-0.17                               |               |
| 302             | Modern made ground – mostly topsoil derived                          | 0.17-0.46                            |               |
| 303             | Light grey clay with yellow brown mottling and some gravelly patches | 0.46-0.70                            |               |
| 304             | Light grey clay  | 0.70-1.36                            |               |
| 305             | Dark grey laminated clay (lias clay)                                 | 1.36-2.25                            |               |
| 306             | Laminated Lias   | 2.25→                                |               |

| Test Pit Number | HD 1  | NGR point) (centre                   | 354910 124295 |
|-----------------|---|--------------------------------------|---------------|
| Length (m)      | Width (m)   | Maximum depth below ground level (m) |               |
| 0.60            | 0.60  | 0.50                                 |               |
| Context Number  | Soil Description  | Depth below ground level (m)         |               |
| 1001            | Paving Slab   | 0-0.05                               |               |
| 1002            | Modern hardcore   | 0.05-0.23                            |               |
| 1003            | Mottled yellow-grey clay with small rounded flint gravel inclusions | 0.23→                                |               |

| Test Pit Number | HD 2   | NGR point) (centre                   | 354910 124295 |
|-----------------|--|--------------------------------------|---------------|
| Length (m)      | Width (m)  | Maximum depth below ground level (m) |               |
| 0.40            | 0.40   | 1.20                                 |               |
| Context Number  | Soil Description   | Depth below ground level (m)         |               |
| 2001            | Re-deposited topsoil - mid grey brown silty clay                                     | 0-0.30                               |               |
| 2002            | Made ground – Mid yellow-brown clay with flint gravel inclusions, concrete, CBM etc. | 0.30→                                |               |

|                        |  |                           |   |
|------------------------|--|---------------------------|---|
| <b>Test Pit Number</b> | <b>HD 3</b>  | <b>NGR point)</b> (centre | <b>354896 124316</b>                        |
| <b>Length (m)</b>      | <b>Width (m)</b>   |                           | <b>Maximum depth below ground level (m)</b> |
| 0.40                   | 0.40   |                           | 1.20  |
| <b>Context Number</b>  | <b>Soil Description</b>  |                           | <b>Depth below ground level (m)</b>         |
| 3001                   | Re-deposited topsoil - mid grey brown silty clay                                     |                           | 0-0.30                                      |
| 3002                   | Made ground – Mid yellow-brown clay with flint gravel inclusions, concrete, CBM etc. |                           | 0.30→                                       |

## APPENDIX 2: OASIS RECORD FORM

RNAS Yeovilton - Wessex Archaeology

OASIS ID - wessexar1-132870

### Versions

| View   | Version | Completed by | Email                   | Date           |
|--------|---------|--------------|-------------------------|----------------|
| View 1 | 1       | Sue Farr     | s.farr@wessexarch.co.uk | 28 August 2012 |

### Completed sections in current version

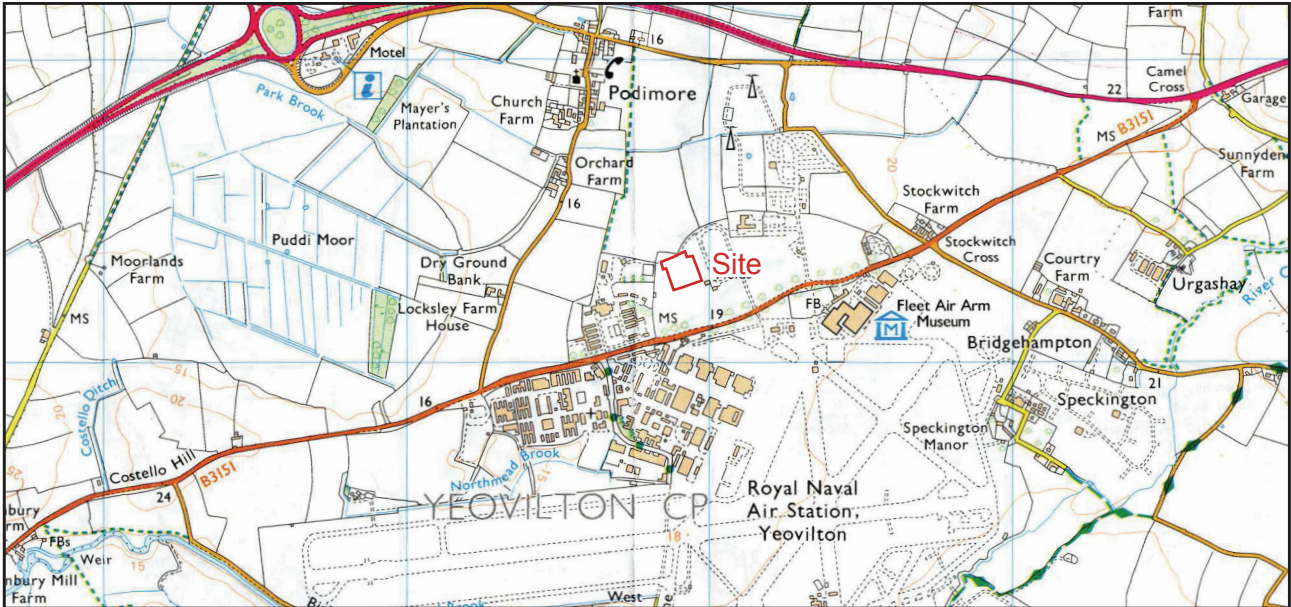
| Details | Location | Creators | Archive | Publications |
|---------|----------|----------|---------|--------------|
| Yes     | Yes      | Yes      | Yes     | 1/1          |


### Validated sections in current version

| Details | Location | Creators | Archive | Publications |
|---------|----------|----------|---------|--------------|
| No      | No       | No       | No      | 0/1          |

### File submission and form progress

|                                   |    |                                   |
|-----------------------------------|----|-----------------------------------|
| Grey literature report submitted? | No | Grey literature report filename/s |
| Images submitted?                 | No | Image filename/s                  |
| Boundary file submitted?          | No | Boundary filename                 |



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|---|--|---------------------------|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><span style="border: 1px solid red; display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Site</li> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; background-color: green; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Test pit</li> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; border: 1px solid orange; border-radius: 50%; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Hand dug test pit</li> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; border: 1px dashed blue; margin-right: 5px;"></span> WA 2000 archaeological features</li> </ul> | <p>Reproduced from the 2001 Ordnance Survey 1:25,000 Explorer® map with the permission of the controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office © Crown copyright, Wessex Archaeology, Portway House, Old Sarum Park, Salisbury, Wiltshire. SP4 6EB. Licence Number: 100028190.</p> <p>This material is for client report only © Wessex Archaeology. No unauthorised reproduction.</p> |                           |  |
|    | <p>Date: 20/07/12</p>  | <p>Revision Number: 0</p> |  |
| <p>Scale: 1:25,000 &amp; 1:1000</p>   | <p>Illustrator: KL</p>   |                           |  |
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Site location plan

Figure 1



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