



making sense of heritage

# Project S0015, RAF Brize Norton, Carterton, Oxfordshire

Archaeological Watching Brief Report



Ref: 88470.01  
February 2013



**Project S0015, RAF Brize Norton  
Carterton, Oxfordshire**

**Archaeological Watching Brief Report**

**Prepared for:**

Mansell Construction Services Ltd,  
Roman House,  
Totton,  
Southampton  
SO40 3XF

**Prepared by:**

Wessex Archaeology,  
Portway House,  
Old Sarum Park,  
Salisbury,  
Wiltshire,  
SP4 6EB

[www.wessexarch.co.uk](http://www.wessexarch.co.uk)


**February 2013**

**88740.03**



## Quality Assurance

<b>Project Code</b>	88740	<b>Accession Code</b>	OXCMS: 2013.18	<b>Client Ref.</b>	
<b>Planning Application Ref.</b>		<b>Ordnance Survey (OS) national grid reference (NGR)</b>	428645 206451		

<b>Version</b>	<b>Status*</b>	<b>Prepared by</b>	<b>Checked and Approved By</b>	<b>Approver's Signature</b>	<b>Date</b>
v01	I	NB	SF		15/02/13
File:	X:\PROJECTS\88470\Report\88740_RAF Brize Norton_report v1.0.doc				
File:					
File:					
File:					
File:					
File:					

\* I = Internal Draft; E = External Draft; F = Final

## DISCLAIMER

THE MATERIAL CONTAINED IN THIS REPORT WAS DESIGNED AS AN INTEGRAL PART OF A REPORT TO AN INDIVIDUAL CLIENT AND WAS PREPARED SOLELY FOR THE BENEFIT OF THAT CLIENT. THE MATERIAL CONTAINED IN THIS REPORT DOES NOT NECESSARILY STAND ON ITS OWN AND IS NOT INTENDED TO NOR SHOULD IT BE RELIED UPON BY ANY THIRD PARTY. TO THE FULLEST EXTENT PERMITTED BY LAW WESSEX ARCHAEOLOGY WILL NOT BE LIABLE BY REASON OF BREACH OF CONTRACT NEGLIGENCE OR OTHERWISE FOR ANY LOSS OR DAMAGE (WHETHER DIRECT INDIRECT OR CONSEQUENTIAL) OCCASIONED TO ANY PERSON ACTING OR OMITTING TO ACT OR REFRAINING FROM ACTING IN RELIANCE UPON THE MATERIAL CONTAINED IN THIS REPORT ARISING FROM OR CONNECTED WITH ANY ERROR OR OMISSION IN THE MATERIAL CONTAINED IN THE REPORT. LOSS OR DAMAGE AS REFERRED TO ABOVE SHALL BE DEEMED TO INCLUDE, BUT IS NOT LIMITED TO, ANY LOSS OF PROFITS OR ANTICIPATED PROFITS DAMAGE TO REPUTATION OR GOODWILL LOSS OF BUSINESS OR ANTICIPATED BUSINESS DAMAGES COSTS EXPENSES INCURRED OR PAYABLE TO ANY THIRD PARTY (IN ALL CASES WHETHER DIRECT INDIRECT OR CONSEQUENTIAL) OR ANY OTHER DIRECT INDIRECT OR CONSEQUENTIAL LOSS OR DAMAGE.



# Project S0015, RAF Brize Norton Carterton, Oxfordshire

## Archaeological Watching Brief Report

### Contents

Summary.....	ii
Acknowledgements.....	iii
<b>1 INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>4</b>
1.1 Project background.....	4
1.2 The Site.....	4
<b>2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>3 METHODOLOGY.....</b>	<b>5</b>
3.1 Aims and objectives.....	5
3.2 Watching brief methodology.....	5
3.3 Best practice.....	6
<b>4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>5 STORAGE AND CURATION.....</b>	<b>6</b>
5.2 Copyright.....	6
5.3 Security Copy.....	7
<b>6 REFERENCES.....</b>	<b>7</b>
6.1 Bibliography.....	7
<b>APPENDIX 1: OASIS RECORD FORM.....</b>	<b>8</b>
Project S0015. RAF Brize Norton, Oxfordshire - Wessex Archaeology.....	8
OASIS ID - wessexar1-143782.....	8

### Figures

Figure 1: Site location plan.

**Front cover:** View of Site from the south



## **Project S0015, RAF Brize Norton Carterton, Oxfordshire**

### **Archaeological Watching Brief Report**

#### **Summary**

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Mansell Construction Services Ltd to undertake a sample investigative archaeological watching brief during groundworks at the proposed Simulator Training Buildings, RAF Brize Norton, Carterton, Oxfordshire, (NGR 428645 206451).

Though the proposal is 'Permitted Development' and therefore requires no planning permission Mansell requested an archaeological watching brief to be undertaken to ensure anything of archaeological interest was recorded during the works.

Initial ground reduction was observed in the eastern part of the site and some excavation for foundation trenches and pads was observed in the western part of the site; no archaeological features were recorded. As a significant proportion of the development area had been observed, the low archaeological potential of the site was considered to be confirmed and therefore the watching brief was concluded.

The watching brief was undertaken in January 2013.



## **Project S0015, RAF Brize Norton Carterton, Oxfordshire**

### **Archaeological Watching Brief Report**

#### **Acknowledgements**

This project was commissioned by Mansell Construction Services Ltd and Wessex Archaeology is grateful to Steve Norman in this regard. Wessex Archaeology would like to thank Paul Marsden and Tony Davenport for all their help and assistance on Site. Wessex Archaeology would also like to thank Hugh Coddington, Principal Archaeologist at Oxfordshire County Council for his advice during the project.

The watching brief was undertaken by Naomi Brennan. This report was written and compiled by Naomi Brennan with illustrations by Adela Murray Brown. The project was managed for Wessex Archaeology by Sue Farr.



# Project S0015, RAF Brize Norton Carterton, Oxfordshire

## Archaeological Watching Brief Report

### 1 INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Project background

- 1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Mansell Construction Services Ltd (the Client) to undertake an archaeological watching brief during groundworks at the proposed Simulator Training Buildings, RAF Brize Norton, Carterton, Oxfordshire, (hereafter the 'Site'), centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 428645 206451 (**Figure 1**).
- 1.1.2 West Oxfordshire District Council considered the proposal for a Simulator Building to be 'Permitted Development' and therefore no planning permission was required. Nevertheless, the client requested an archaeological watching brief was undertaken to ensure anything of archaeological interest was recorded during the works.
- 1.1.3 The watching brief was undertaken between 14<sup>th</sup>-30<sup>th</sup> January 2012.

#### 1.2 The Site

- 1.2.1 The Site is situated at RAF Brize Norton, on the southern fringes of Carterton approximately 6.5km west of Witney in West Oxfordshire. It is positioned in the centre of the RAF base and is bounded to the north by Argosy Road, to the west by Devon Place and to the south and east by buildings associated with the base (**Figure 1**).
- 1.2.2 The Site occupies a relatively flat area at approximately 87m above Ordnance Datum (aOD), though the Site does slope slightly downwards towards the east. A number of buildings and other structures formerly occupied the Site and were demolished as part of this project.
- 1.2.3 The British Geological Survey map for the area (1:50,000 Solid and Drift Series) indicates that the underlying geology of the Site consists of Cornbrash.

### 2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1.1 Although there are no recorded archaeological sites within the development area, a background of archaeological features and finds are located to the north and east of the Site and recorded on the Oxfordshire Sites and Monuments Record (SMR), and may indicate prehistoric and later activity in the immediate area.
- 2.1.2 An Iron Age settlement (OX157) and Saxon cemetery (OX 1498 and 1499) are recorded in the vicinity, along with a number of prehistoric worked flints (OX 5461) a Neolithic Axe (OX 15810) and Romano-British (OX 4248) and medieval (OX2279) pottery sherds.
- 2.1.3 Within the base itself to the east of the Site, the Marsh Haddon Deserted Medieval Village is recorded which covered approximately a hectare.

- 2.1.4 The airfield itself was established in 1935 and officially opened on 13<sup>th</sup> August 1937. The Station was used for various forms of flying training until July 1942, when it became the home of the Heavy Glider Conversion Unit (HGCU), later renamed No 21 HGCU, which remained at RAF Brize Norton until 31 December 1945.
- 2.1.5 Between March and October 1944 Brize Norton airfield was used as a base for parachute and glider operations by Nos. 296 and 297 Squadrons, both equipped with Albemarles. These squadrons were used for D-Day landings in June 1944, the assault on Arnhem in September 1944 and contributed to the war-time supply lines.
- 2.1.6 The USAF formally accepted control of RAF Brize Norton in 1951 until on 1 April 1965 the Royal Air Force took back control of RAF Brize Norton and it became a Transport Command airfield. New hangars were constructed, and the base was home to Nos 10, 53, 99 and 511 Squadrons. Early in 1972, the Station became part of No 46 Group, Strike Command and, in October 1975, became part of No 38 Group, Strike Command. Tactical support for combat rather than Cold-war deterrence was provided by the base during the Falklands conflict in 1982 and subsequently during the First Gulf War in 1991.

### 3 METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Aims and objectives

- 3.1.1 The objective of the watching brief was to establish within the constraints of the agreed strategy the presence or absence, location, extent, date, character, condition, and depth of any surviving remains which may be affected by the proposed development.
- 3.1.2 In particular the watching brief aimed to clarify the impact upon the archaeological significance of any groundworks necessary for the construction of the new development and ensure its preservation by record.

#### 3.2 Watching brief methodology

- 3.2.1 The full detailed methodology of the archaeological works was set out in a Written Scheme of Investigation (WA 2013), and is summarised below.
- 3.2.2 A strip, map and sample investigative watching brief was undertaken when groundworks commenced within the footprint of the building. This was particularly focused on the western third of the Site which had seen less disturbance from previous structures. The watching brief ceased when a significant proportion of the groundworks had been seen with no archaeological features observed.
- 3.2.3 All archaeological deposits were recorded using Wessex Archaeology's *pro forma* record sheets with a unique numbering system for individual contexts. Archaeological features and deposits were hand-drawn at either 1:10 or 1:20 as appropriate. Monitored works were located using data provided by the client and referenced to OS mapping.
- 3.2.4 A full photographic record was compiled using digital images. The record illustrates both the detail and the general context of the principal features, finds excavated, and the Site as a whole. Digital images have been subject to a managed quality control and curation process which has embedded appropriate metadata within the image and ensures the long term accessibility of the image set.
- 3.2.5 A unique site code **88470** was allocated to the Site, and was used on all records and finds.





### 3.3 Best practice

- 3.3.1 The watching brief was carried out in accordance with the relevant guidance given in the *Institute for Archaeologist's Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* (IfA 2008).

## 4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS

- 4.1.1 In the western third of the Site there was the opportunity to observe the initial ground reduction onto the top of the underlying limestone cornbrash (**Figure 1**). No archaeological features were observed though there were several irregular small features concluded to be of natural origin.
- 4.1.2 In the eastern part of the Site the initial reduction had already been completed and the ground then covered with a protective layer of stone therefore the initial part of the foundation excavations was observed (**Figure 1**). In addition to several modern service trenches a possible linear feature was observed. However the deposit within this was a very homogeneous mid red clay and the edges of the feature were slightly irregular and diffuse suggesting that this is more likely a natural feature. Another feature concluded to be of natural origin with a similar deposit was also observed.
- 4.1.3 As a significant proportion of the Site had been observed and no archaeological features found, the low archaeological potential of the Site was considered to be confirmed and therefore the watching brief ceased.
- 4.1.4 The general stratigraphic sequence observed comprised 0.20m of a mid red-brown topsoil overlying 0.15m of a mid red clay subsoil which in turn overlies the cornbrash. However, in some areas the cornbrash was directly below tarmac or modern disturbed ground and the subsoil was not always present beneath the topsoil.

## 5 STORAGE AND CURATION

- 5.1.1 It is recommended that the project archive resulting from the excavation be deposited with the Oxfordshire County Museum. The Museum has agreed in principle to accept the project archive on completion of the project, under the accession code OXCMS: 2013.18.
- 5.1.2 The complete site archive, which will include paper records, photographic records and graphics, will be prepared following the standard conditions for the acceptance of excavated archaeological material by Oxfordshire County Museum, and in general following nationally recommended guidelines (Walker 1990; SMA 1995; Richards and Robinson 2000; Brown 2007).
- 5.1.3 An OASIS online record <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/projects/oasis/> will be initiated and key fields completed on Details, Location and Creators Forms. All appropriate parts of the OASIS online form will be completed for submission to the AHBR. This will include an uploaded .pdf version of the entire report (a paper copy will also be included with the archive).

### 5.2 Copyright

- 5.2.1 This report may contain material that is non-Wessex Archaeology copyright (e.g. Ordnance Survey, British Geological Survey, Crown Copyright), 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.

### **5.3 Security Copy**

5.3.1 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.

## **6 REFERENCES**

### **6.1 Bibliography**

British Geological Survey information available at:

<http://www.bgs.ac.uk/data/services/digmap50wms.html>

Brown, D.H., 2007, *Archaeological archives; a guide to best practice in creation, compilation, transfer and curation*, Archaeological Archives Forum

Richards, J. and Robinson, D., 2000, *Digital Archives From Excavation and Fieldwork: a guide to good practice*, Archaeology Data Service

SMA 1995, *Towards an Accessible Archaeological Archive*, Society of Museum Archaeologists

Walker, K., 1990, *Guidelines for the Preparation of Excavation Archives for Long-Term Storage*, UKIC Archaeology Section

Wessex Archaeology, 2013, *A40 Training Building, RAF Brize Norton, Carterton, Oxfordshire: Project design for an archaeological watching brief*, unpublished project design, reference 88470.01



## APPENDIX 1: OASIS RECORD FORM

### Project S0015. RAF Brize Norton, Oxfordshire - Wessex Archaeology

OASIS ID - wessexar1-143782

#### Versions

View	Version	Completed by	Email	Date
<a href="#">View 1</a>	1	Sue Farr	s.farr@wessexarch.co.uk	15 February 2013

#### 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
HER signed off?		NMR signed off?



Survey data supplied by client  
 Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown Copyright and database right 2012.  
 This material is for client report only © Wessex Archaeology. No unauthorised reproduction.



Date:	05/02/2013	Revision Number:	0
Scale:	1:25 000 & 1:1000 @ A4	Illustrator:	AMB
Path:	Y:\PROJECTS\88470\Drawing Office\Report figs\WB\13_02_04\88470_WB.dwg		

Site location plan

Figure 1



salisbury rochester sheffield edinburgh



Wessex Archaeology Ltd registered office Portway House, Old Sarum Park, Salisbury, Wiltshire SP4 6EB  
Tel: 01722 326867 Fax: 01722 337562 info@wessexarch.co.uk www.wessexarch.co.uk



Wessex Archaeology Ltd is a company limited by guarantee registered in England, company number 1712772. It is also a Charity registered in England and Wales, number 287786; and in Scotland, Scottish Charity number SC042630. Our registered office is at Portway House, Old Sarum Park, Salisbury, Wiltshire SP4 6EB.