

# Taunton's College, Hill Lane, Southampton

Watching Brief Report

Wessex Archaeology



Ref: 55268.02

*February 2004*

**TAUNTON'S COLLEGE, HILL LANE, SOUTHAMPTON**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF**

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## ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

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**Figure 1: Site location plan showing areas monitored during the watching brief**

# TAUNTON'S COLLEGE, HILL LANE, SOUTHAMPTON

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

### SUMMARY

Wessex Archaeology was invited by Hornglade Projects, acting on behalf of Taunton's College to carry out an archaeological watching brief in regards groundwork associated with the construction of a new residential block within the College grounds.

The Site lies within an area of potential archaeological importance as defined in Policy ENV4 of the City of Southampton Local Plan (1995)

The redevelopment area, located on the edge of the playing fields, comprised a sub-rectangular area 25m x 25m that was stripped of topsoil and foundation trenches to the south for a new residential accommodation block. Observation of groundwork associated with the foundation trenches was curtailed in agreement with Alan Morton of Southampton's Heritage Conservation Unit. The redevelopment area was centred on National Grid Reference 441000 114350.

The stratigraphic sequence recorded from the profiles of the foundation trenches revealed topsoil overlying brick rubble which in turn overlay a mixture of brick rubble and subsoil forming a makeup layer. The bedrock sealed beneath comprised calcareous clay. The stripped area revealed calcareous clay bedrock lying immediately below the topsoil.

No archaeological features were revealed during the watching brief.

The fieldwork was undertaken during January 2004.

# **TAUNTON'S COLLEGE, HILL LANE, SOUTHAMPTON**

## **ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF**

### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The work was commissioned by Hornglade Projects acting on behalf of Taunton's College. We would like to thank Giles Marchant of Hornglade Projects and Richard Burton of ACS for their assistance.

Cornelius Barton carried out the fieldwork. David Godden compiled this report and S. E. James prepared the illustrations. Richard Greatorex managed the project on behalf of Wessex Archaeology.

# TAUNTON'S COLLEGE, HILL LANE, SOUTHAMPTON

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

### 1. INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1. Project Background

- 1.1.1 This document has been prepared by Wessex Archaeology for Hornglade Projects acting on behalf of Taunton's College in respect of a development (new teaching accommodation) at Taunton's College, Hill Lane, (hereafter the Site).
- 1.1.2 Taunton's College has made two planning applications for residential redevelopment. The application numbers are 03/00304/OUT AND 03/00305/OUT. Southampton City Council's Heritage Conservation Unit's (acting as adviser to the LPA) internal reference numbers for these are 5679 and 5680.
- 1.1.3 The Site lies within an area of potential archaeological importance as defined in Policy ENV4 of the City of Southampton Local Plan (1995). In response to the applications the Heritage Conservation Unit advised that an archaeological watching brief (with an option to excavate particularly important features) was undertaken at the Site. The Heritage Conservation Unit provided a written scheme of investigation.
- 1.1.4 A Project Design was prepared by Wessex Archaeology in order to meet the aims and objectives of the WSI. The Project Design was submitted to the Heritage Conservation Unit for their approval prior to the commencement of archaeological fieldwork.

#### 1.2. The Site

- 1.2.1 The Site comprised a sub-rectangular area of land approximately 25m x 25m and, lying to the south, the foundation trenches (measuring approximately 32m x 18m) associated with the construction of a new residential accommodation block. The existing College buildings bound these areas to the south, the College playing fields to the west, a tarmac parking area to the north and a grassed area to the east. The Site was centred on National Grid Reference 441000 114350.
- 1.2.2 The current land use of the Site was as a grassed area adjacent to the College sports field.
- 1.2.3 The Site lies at approximately 29m above Ordnance Datum (aOD). The underlying geology according to geological charts is river terrace gravel but within the area of the Site the bedrock is predominantly calcareous clay which forms part of the river gravel facies.

## **2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

- 2.1.1 Very little is known about the archaeological potential of the Site or its immediate environs other than that it lies within an area of prehistoric findspots, hence the importance of establishing presence and absence of remains for the archaeological record.

## **3. OBJECTIVES**

- 3.1.1 The aim of the Watching Brief was to record as far as was reasonably possible, the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains observed during the contractor's below ground work.

## **4. METHOD STATEMENT**

- 4.1.1. A sub-rectangular area measuring 25m x 25m was stripped of topsoil by a 360 degree tracked excavator under archaeological supervision and the area examined for the presence/absence of archaeological features.
- 4.1.2 In addition part of the machine excavation of foundation trenches for the new residential accommodation block was carried out under archaeological supervision. After approximately 50% of the trenching had been observed without archaeological features being encountered, Alan Morton of Southampton's Heritage and Conservation Unit was consulted and it was agreed that further archaeological monitoring could cease. The areas observed are indicated on **Figure 1**.
- 4.1.3. The spoil from the excavations was inspected for artefacts.
- 4.1.4 A digital photographic record was made during all of the investigations.

## **5. RESULTS**

- 5.1.1 Near the existing college buildings the following stratigraphic sequence was observed in the excavation for the footings:
- 0.20m of grass on topsoil
  - 0.15m of modern brick rubble makeup
  - 0.40m of modern subsoil and rubble makeup
  - Natural deposits of pale grey calcareous clay
- 5.1.2 It would appear that the topsoil had been removed and the ground level raised by approximately half a metre.
- 5.1.3 In the area of the 25m x 25m strip, the topsoil was stripped and down to a depth of approximately 0.3m below present ground level. Below the topsoil the bedrock (calcareous clay) was encountered throughout the area. There was no indication within the stripped area to suggest that ground levels had

been artificially reduced or that archaeological remains may have been truncated.

- 5.1.4 No archaeological remains were revealed in either of the areas observed within the Site. The lack of archaeological features and stray finds encountered within the Site would appear to support the impression that the prehistoric activity signified by findspots within the general environs of the Site are probably indicative of dispersed rather than concentrated settlement activity.

## **6. THE ARCHIVE**

- 6.1.1 The project archive, which consists of an A4 ringbinder and a collection of digital photographs, is currently held at the offices of Wessex Archaeology at Old Sarum, Salisbury, Wiltshire under the project code 55268. The Site Archive has been prepared to the standards set out in the *Management of Archaeological Projects, Version 2* (English Heritage) and the *Standards for the Deposition of Archaeological Archives with Southampton City Council*. The Archive will also be prepared for long term storage use in accordance *Guidelines for the Preparation of Excavation Archives for Long Term Storage* (Walker 1990). In due course the archive will be deposited with the Southampton City Museum Service, once it has been security microfilmed/microfiched in line with the criteria set out by the Royal Commission for Historic Monuments.

## **7. BIBLIOGRAPHY**

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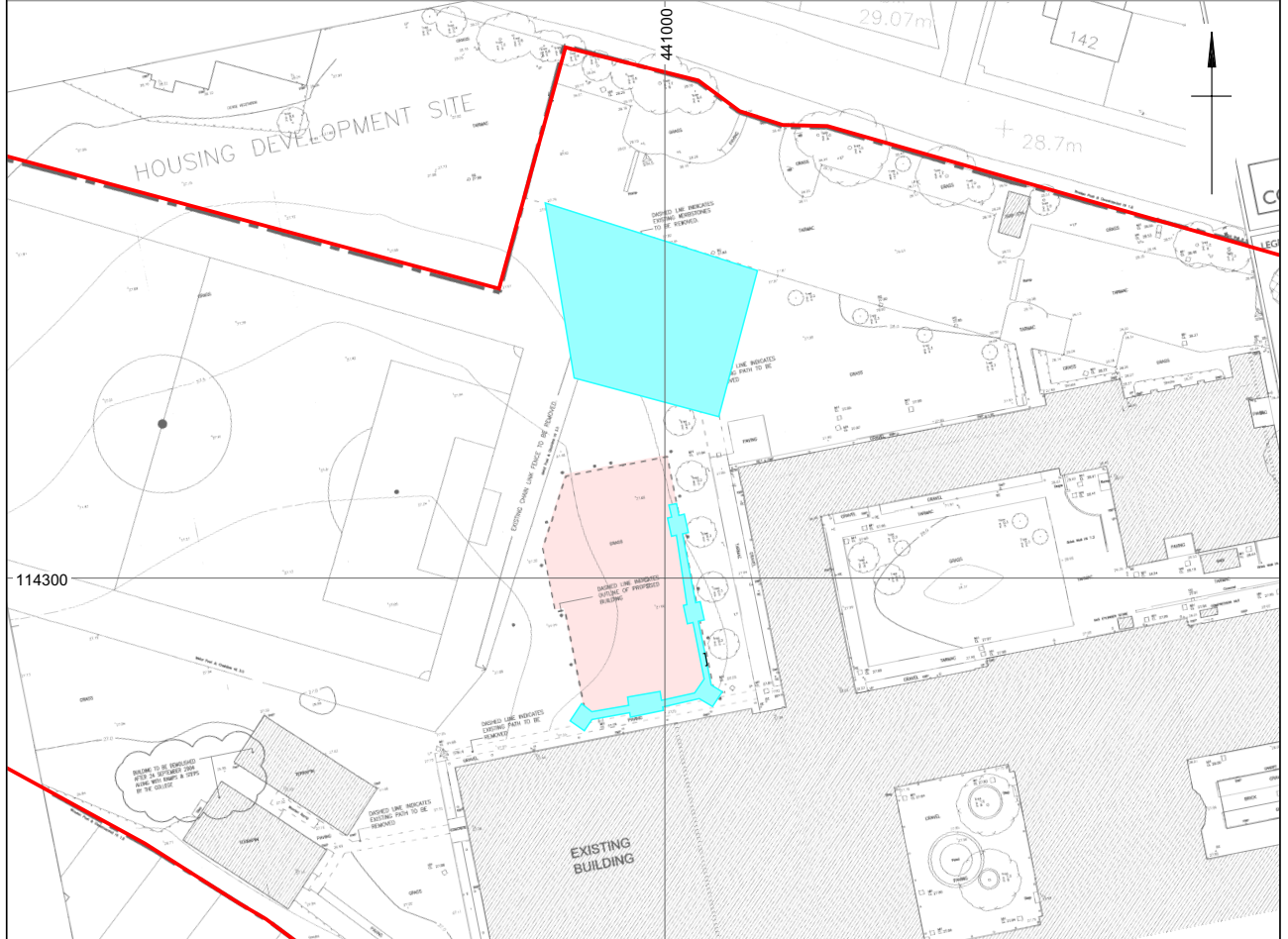
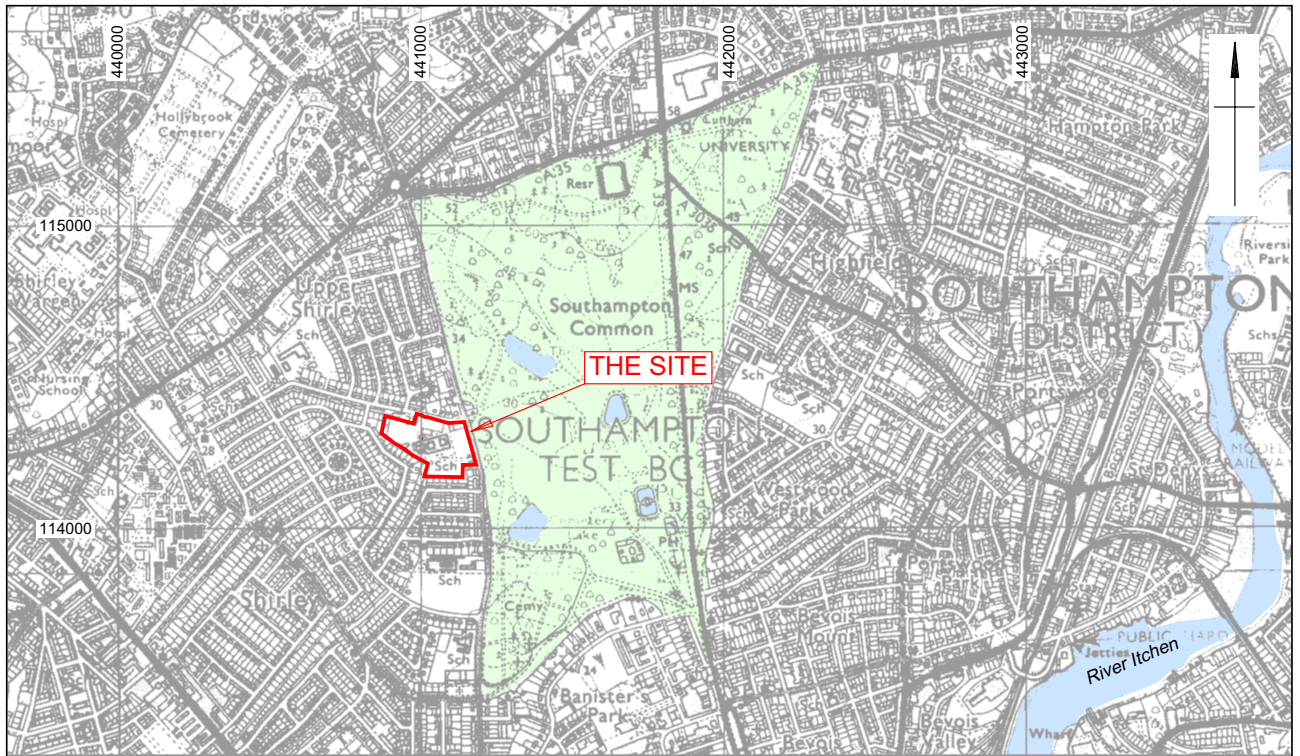
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Site location showing areas mentioned during the watching brief.

Figure 1