

# Land adjacent to Southampton Solent University

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

SOU1604 Ref: 86430.01

September 2012



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# **Archaeological Watching Brief Report**

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## **Quality Assurance**

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

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#### Summary

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by WSP Environmental to undertake an archaeological watching brief during geotechnic investigations associated with the proposed redevelopment of land adjacent to Southampton Solent University, Southampton, Hampshire, centred on Ordnance Survey National Grid Reference 442264 112215.

The fieldwork, under Southampton City Museum accession code SOU1604, was undertaken on 21<sup>st</sup> August 2012, and comprised archaeological monitoring during the excavation of seven geotechnic trial pits. The opportunity was also taken to incorporate the results of as many of seven associated borehole drills logs as were available.

A previous desk-based assessment for the proposed development highlighted potential for various remains, including: stray early prehistoric artefacts; remains associated with a putative Iron Age enclosure in the immediate vicinity; remains associated with the very periphery of Anglo-Saxon *Hamwic*; possibly medieval and post-medieval agricultural field systems; and the remains of later post-medieval and early modern building remains.

No significant archaeological remains were observed. The watching brief recorded a variable stratigraphic sequence across the site, as would be anticipated in such an urban context. Two features were recorded, a modern garden wall trench in TP2 that correlates with a property boundary still shown on Ordnance Survey mapping (though the properties themselves have recently been demolished), and an undated probable post-medieval/ modern ditch in TP6.

Evidence from TP1 and TP5 suggests that the former substantial town-house properties in this location fronting on to East Park Terrace and/or the more recent Ambulance Station and associated buildings had basements/ cellars which have resulted in substantial impact to deposits of archaeological potential in this zone. A layer of red brick at 1.9m depth in BH4, whilst possibly representing a localised deeper impact (when compared, for instance, to the stratigraphic sequence encountered in nearby TP1), may also be evidence for cellaring associated with the terraced properties formerly in this area.

## Acknowledgements

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by WSP Environmental, and would like to thank Simon Cleggett (WSP Assistant Archaeological Consultant) for his co-operation and assistance throughout the project. The Written Scheme of Investigation was reviewed and approved on behalf of Southampton City Council by Kevin White (Historic Buildings Team Leader). The on-site assistance of Mike McCann, Luke Partridge and Stephen Jones (AP Geotechnics), and Jim Edwards (plant operator) is also gratefully acknowledged.

The fieldwork was conducted by Grace Flood, this report was collated by Andrew Crockett based on Grace's on-site records, with comments on the artefacts by Lorraine Mepham, and the illustrations provided by Linda Coleman. The project was managed on behalf of Wessex Archaeology by Andrew Crockett.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Project Background

- 1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology (WA) was commissioned by WSP Environmental to undertake an archaeological watching brief during geotechnic investigations associated with the proposed redevelopment of land adjacent to Southampton Solent University, Southampton, Hampshire, centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 442264 112215 (Figure 1; the Site).
- 1.1.2 This fieldwork was undertaken on 21<sup>st</sup> August 2012 under Southampton City Museum accession code SOU1604, and this report has been prepared to present the results of these investigations.

## 1.2 The Site

- 1.2.1 The Site is situated on brickearth deposits overlying river terrace gravel within central Southampton, adjacent to Southampton Solent University to the south, and bounded by the A33 inner ring road to the east and north, and East Park Terrace (and East Park beyond) to the west.
- 1.2.2 Topographically, the site occupies a south-east facing slope overlooking the River Itchen floodplain, descending north-west to south-east from *c*. 15.8m above Ordnance Datum (aOD) to 8.8m aOD. The natural topography has, however, been much altered by modern development, including a terraced car park adjoining the Site's southern boundary.

## 1.3 Archaeological and Historical Background

- 1.3.1 A desk-based assessment (DBA) has already been prepared for this site, which considers the archaeological and historical background and potential of the site in detail (CgMs 2004). This work will not be repeated here, but in summary the key considerations are as follows:
  - Though poorly defined, and with no apparent focus, diagnostic Mesolithic, Neolithic and Iron Age artefacts have been recovered in low numbers from a number of locations in the immediate vicinity;
  - Archaeological investigations in 1971 at a site which is poorly located, but may have been either inside the Site within the footprint of the existing car park, or immediately outside the Site to the south, revealed evidence for Iron Age activity, including features, pottery, briquetage and burnt daub – similarly dated remains located in nearby locations has collectively served to suggest an extensive Iron Age settlement was situated at, or in close proximity to, the Site;
  - The Site is located on the north-west edge of Middle Saxon Hamwic, though on the basis of evidence recorded during the major excavation at nearby Six Dials, possibly beyond the main focus of settlement, and within the agricultural hinterland of the settlement it is of note that no remains of Saxon date were recorded during the 1971 excavation;
  - Medieval Southampton was focussed to the south of the Site, and few remains of this period are recorded in the general vicinity of the Site;
  - Evidence suggests the site is open farmland for much of the post-medieval and modern period, certainly until the mid-19th century at the earliest;

- Thereafter, extensive Victorian terraced housing develops along most street frontages (i.e. St Andrew's Rd, St Mary's Rd, Trinity Rd etc.), with large town houses overlooking East Park along East Park Terrace;
- By the 1960s, most of this housing stock has been cleared to the south-west of St Andrew's Rd, to be replaced by the modern-day Southampton Solent University (formerly Southampton College of Technology), and an ambulance station and health clinic (the latter two now demolished).

## 2 SCOPE OF WORKS

## 2.1 WSI

2.1.1 The investigations were carried out under a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) prepared by WA (WA 2012), which set out the proposed archaeological works currently under consideration for the Site. The WSI was commented upon and approved by Kevin White of the Historic Environment Service of Southampton City Council, on behalf of the Local Planning Authority.

## 2.2 Fieldwork

2.2.1 The fieldwork comprised an archaeological watching brief during the excavation of seven machine-excavated geotechnical recording trial pits (TP1-7), with logs obtained for three drilled boreholes (BHs) also carried out during the same phase of investigation (**Figure 1**).

## 3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

## 3.1 Aims

- 3.1.1 With due regard to the IfA *Standards and Guidance for archaeological watching brief* (IfA 2008), the generic aims of the archaeological watching brief were 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.

#### 3.2 Objectives

- 3.2.1 The watching brief focussed on two critical objectives:
  - Identification, recording, and if feasible, rapid excavation/ recovery of archaeological remains exposed; and
  - Recording a summary of the stratigraphic sequence encountered this data will inform any further consideration of appropriate mitigation measures.

## 4 RESULTS

## 4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 The stratigraphic sequences and archaeological remains encountered in trial pits and boreholes, including location details, are tabulated in **Appendix 1**.

# 4.2 Stratigraphic sequence

- 4.2.1 The stratigraphic sequence, although comparatively variable across the Site, can be summarised as follows:
  - Made-ground: encountered in all trial pits, primarily comprising building rubble and/or gravel surfaces, and including the tarmacked surface and foundation levels for a former road at TP6;
  - Topsoil: encountered in TP1, 3, 4, 5 and 7 below made-ground, generally comprising light greyish brown silty loam;
  - Subsoil/ Layers: encountered in various forms and to varying depths in all trial pits, generally characterised by relatively common occurrences of modern building debris. In some instances (e.g. TP1 and TP5; **Plate 2**) it is possible that these substantial deposits represented the fills of former sub-ground level features (i.e. cellars) the boundaries of which were not observed within the relatively constrained confines of the trial pits this is possibly corroborated by the logging of 'sands and gravels' at considerable depth for BH3 and BH6 ;
  - Natural: encountered in all trial pits, between 0.3m and 3m below modern ground surface, though disregarding the probable effect of cellaring associated with TP1 and TP5, tending towards an average of 0.6m below ground surface, and comprising a brickearth-like deposit of mottled yellowish to greyish brown fine-grained silty clay with rare inclusions.

## 4.3 Archaeological remains

- 4.3.1 Only two archaeological features were observed during the watching brief.
- 4.3.2 Cut **2003** comprised the northeast to southwest aligned wall foundation trench for a 19<sup>th</sup>/ 20<sup>th</sup> century brick wall in TP2 (**Plate 1**). The cut was vertically-sided and flat bottomed, measuring 0.56m wide and 0.45m deep and extended in both directions beyond the limit of the trial pit. Two courses of single-skin English bond brick wall footings remained *in situ*, and the trench was back-filled with a loose unconsolidated deposit comprising builders sand, yellowish brown silty sand and frequent modern building debris (brick, concrete, electrical fittings etc.). The alignment and location of this feature correlates with a former garden boundary wall between nos. 69 and 70/71 St Andrews Rd, recently demolished terraced houses that are still shown on Ordnance Survey digital mapping for the area (**Figure 1**).
- 4.3.3 Ditch **6007** comprised a north to south aligned *c*. 1.2m wide and 0.7m deep ditch with concave sides and a rounded profile, continuing beyond the limits of the trial pit in both directions (**Plate 3**). It was filled with a 0.08m thin primary fill of orange brown sandy silt apparently lining the edge of the cut, and a main secondary fill of light greyish brown clayey silt containing frequent stone inclusions. Although no dating evidence was recovered from this feature, the feature did not appear to represent remains of any great antiquity.
- 4.3.4 In addition, it is also of note that BH4 recorded a layer of red brick (floor or building debris) at approximately 1.9m below modern ground surface, in an area formerly occupied by terraced housing.

## 4.4 Artefacts

4.4.1 Finds were recovered from TP2, 3 and 6, but consisted only of a few pieces of modern ceramic building material (roof tile, drainpipe), pottery (transfer-printed whiteware), iron

(structural fitting), and a small wooden post. Some of these were found unstratified, although one piece of roof tile came from subsoil context 2002 in TP2, and the remains of a modern wooden post from layer 3003 in TP3. None of these finds have been retained.

## 4.5 Environmental remains

4.5.1 In the absence of deposits that were stratigraphical secure, and/or of pre-modern date, and/or of clear palaeoenvironmental potential, and in accordance with best practice (e.g. EH 2011), no environmental samples were taken during the archaeological watching brief.

## 5 DISCUSSION

- 5.1.1 The watching brief has recorded a somewhat variable stratigraphic sequence across the site, but one which could be anticipated in such an urban context that has witnessed successive phases of major development since the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century onwards. No archaeological remains of significance have been observed, though the probable modern ditch in TP6 remains undated.
- 5.1.2 Evidence from TP1 and TP5 suggests that the former substantial town-house properties in this location fronting on to East Park Terrace and/or the more recent Ambulance Station and associated buildings had basements/ cellars which have resulted in substantial impact to deposits of archaeological potential in this zone.
- 5.1.3 The layer of red brick at 1.9m depth in BH4, whilst possibly representing a localised deeper impact (when compared, for instance, to the stratigraphic sequence encountered in nearby TP1), may also be evidence for cellaring associated with the terraced properties formerly in this area.

#### 6 BIBLIOGRAPHY

- CgMs Consulting, 2004, Land at East Park Terrace, Southampton Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment, unpublished client report no. RB/5476
- English Heritage [EH], 2011, Environmental Archaeology: A Guide to the Theory and Practice of Methods, from Sampling and Recovery to Post-excavation (second edition)
- Institute for Archaeologists [IfA], 2008, *Standards and Guidance for archaeological* watching brief
- Wessex Archaeology [WA], 2012, Land adjacent to Southampton Solent University Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief, unpublished client report no. T16247.01

# 7 APPENDICES

# 7.1 Appendix 1: Trial Pit summaries

Context descriptions are presented in stratigraphic order, not numerical

## TP1

NGR:	442180 112416	
Dimensions:	2.4m x 0.8m	
Context no.	Description	Depth (m)
1001	MADE-GROUND: Crushed building rubble (concrete, brick, tile etc.).	0 – 0.05
1002	TOPSOIL: Light greyish brown silty loam with moderate subangular to subrounded flint gravel inclusions.	0.05 – 0.20
1003	LAYER: Relatively uncompacted thick layer of modern brick, tile and concrete rubble in a loose mid brown sandy loam matrix.	0.20 – 1.90
1004	NATURAL: Mottled reddish/ greyish brown silty clay with very occasional subrounded flint gravel inclusions.	1.90+

## TP2

NGR:	442233 112421	
Dimensions:	2.2m x 1.0m	
Context no.	Description	Depth (m)
2001	MADE-GROUND: Loose subangular flint gravel in a grey brown silty sand and cement matrix, overlying modern concrete paving slabs.	0 – 0.10
2004	FILL: Fill of <b>2003</b> , primarily comprising a loose unconsolidated fill of non-homogenous yellow builders sand, yellowish brown silty sand and much modern building debris, but including two courses of surviving English bond single- skin brick work against the SW edge of the cut.	0.10 – 0.55
2003	CUT: Approx. SW/NE aligned vertical sided flat bottomed wall foundation trench, 0.65m wide and 0.45m deep.	0.10 – 0.55
2002	SUBSOIL: Mid grey brown clayey silt with frequent subrounded to subangular flint inclusions.	0.10 - 0.60
2005	NATURAL: Mottled reddish/ greyish brown silty clay with very occasional subrounded flint gravel inclusions.	0.60+

TP3		
NGR:	442202 112410	
Dimensions:	2.0m x 0.7m	
Context no.	Description	Depth (m)
3001	MADE-GROUND: Loose subangular flint gravel in a grey brown silty sand and cement matrix.	0 – 0.05
3002	TOPSOIL: Light reddish brown sandy silt with rare subangular to subrounded flint gravel inclusions.	0.05 – 0.35
3003	LAYER: Very dark brown sandy silt with frequent subangular to subrounded flint gravel, brick fragments, timber and window glass.	0.35 – 0.75
3004	NATURAL: Mottled reddish brown silty clay with very occasional subrounded flint gravel inclusions.	0.75+

# TP4

NGR:	442220 112397	
Dimensions:	2.0m x 0.7m	
Context no.	Description	Depth (m)
4001	MADE-GROUND: Crushed building rubble (concrete, brick, tile etc.) and subangular flint gravel.	0 – 0.05
4002	TOPSOIL: Light greyish brown silty loam with moderate subangular to subrounded flint gravel inclusions.	0.05 – 0.15
4003	SUBSOIL: Light greyish brown sandy silt with common subangular to subrounded flint inclusions.	0.15 – 0.50
4004	LAYER: Mottled reddish brown silty clay with very occasional subrounded flint gravel inclusions.	0.50 – 1.00
4005	LAYER: Very dark brown clayey silt with very rare inclusions, only present as a lens in the NE facing section.	1.00 – 1.25
4006	NATURAL: Mottled yellowish brown silty clay with very occasional subrounded flint gravel inclusions.	1.00+
Comment:	<b>It:</b> Very strong hydrocarbon fumes were noted during the excavation of this trial pit, including discharge of an oily liquid at the base of the trial pit. It is probable that the pronounced discolouration of layer 4005 is associated with this contamination.	

TP5	
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15		
NGR:	442184 112360	
Dimensions:	2.6m x 0.8m	
Context no.	Description	Depth (m)
5001	MADE-GROUND: Crushed building rubble (concrete, brick, tile etc.) and subangular flint gravel in a light brownish grey sand/ cement matrix.	0 – 0.10
5002	TOPSOIL: Light greyish brown silty loam with moderate subangular to subrounded flint gravel inclusions, and including modern brick rubble, drain cover fragments etc.	0.10 – 0.30
5003	LAYER: Dark greyish brown sandy silt with frequent subangular flint gravel and modern building debris.	0.30 – 1.40
5004	LAYER: Reddish brown silty sand with frequent subrounded flint gravel inclusions.	1.40 – 3.00
5005	NATURAL: Mottled yellowish brown silty clay with very rare subrounded flint gravel inclusions.	3.00+

# TP6

NGR:	442222 112330	
Dimensions:	2.2m x 0.6m	
Context no.	Description	Depth (m)
6001	SURFACE: Tarmacadam road surface. Seals 6002.	0 – 0.05
6002	LAYER: Levelling layer for road 6001 of silty sand with frequent small subangular flint gravel.	0.05 – 0.09
6003	LAYER: Basal layer for road 6001 of light reddish brown (pink) silty sand with frequent small to medium subangular flint gravel.	0.09 – 0.16
6004	LAYER: Dark greyish brown silty clay with frequent small subangular to subrounded flint gravel.	0.16 – 0.30
6006	FILL: Secondary fill of ditch <b>6007</b> , primarily comprising a light greyish brown clayey silt containing frequent medium to large sunangular to subrounded flint inclusions.	0.30 – 0.90
6005	FILL: Primary fill of ditch <b>6007</b> , comprising a 0.08m thin layer of orange brown sandy silt, apparently lining the edge of ditch <b>6007</b> .	0.90 – 0.98
6007	DITCH: the western side of a N/S aligned ditch, with moderate concave sides and a rounded base, 0.68m deep and predicted full width estimated as <i>c</i> . 1.2m.	0.30 – 0.98
6008	NATURAL: Mottled yellowish brown silty clay with very rare subrounded flint gravel inclusions.	0.30+

#### TP7

NGR:	442250 112328	
Dimensions:	2.0m x 0.7m	
Context no.	Description	Depth (m)
7001	MADE-GROUND: Car park surface, comprising compacted subangular gravel in a matrix of reddish brown sandy silt.	0 – 0.25
7002	TOPSOIL: Dark greyish brown clayey silt with moderate subangular to subrounded flint gravel inclusions, CBM fragments etc.	0.25 – 0.40
7004	LAYER: Thin very dark brown spread of sand loam forming the interface between 7002 and 7003.	0.40 - 0.45
7003	NATURAL: Mottled greyish/ yellowish brown silty clay with very occasional subrounded flint gravel inclusions.	0.45+

# 7.2 Appendix 2: Borehole logs

The borehole sequences described below are those made available during fieldwork operations, and are derived from the drilling engineer logs

BH1

7.2.1 Although drilling for BH1 (442236 112450) was underway during the archaeological watching brief attendance (see **Plate 4**), this borehole encountered considerable obstructions during drilling, and could not be completed within the timeframe for the remainder of the watching brief.

#### BH2

7.2.2 NGR co-ordinates for BH2 (no log available) was 442195 112437.

#### BH3

NGR:	442181 112386	
Context no.	Description	Depth (m)
BH3001	Made-ground	0 – 0.70
BH3002	Sands and Gravels	0.70 - 3.60
BH3003	Solid Geology	3.60+

#### BH4

NGR:	442246 112429		
Context no.	Description	Depth (m)	
BH4001	Made-ground	0 – 1.00	
BH4002	Sands and Gravels, with layer of brick noted at 1.9m below ground surface.	1.00 – 5.50	
Comment:	No further readings possible below 5.5m, solid geology not encountered.		

BH5

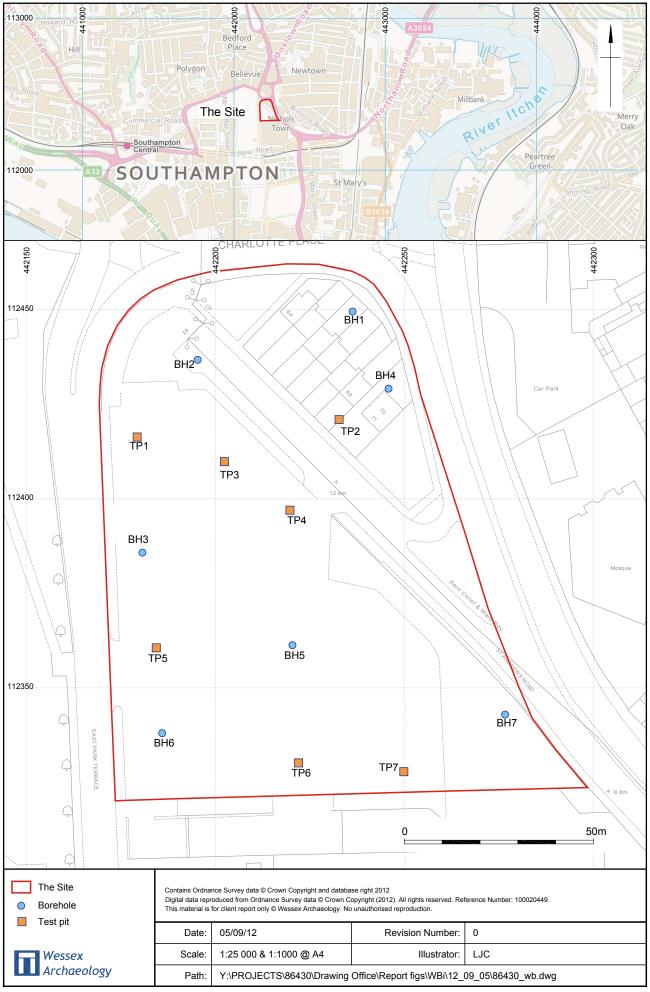
7.2.3 NGR co-ordinates for BH5 (no log available) was 442220 112361.

# BH6

NGR:	442186 112338	
Context no.	Description	Depth (m)
BH6001	Made-ground	0 – 0.80
BH6002	Sands and Gravels	0.80 - 3.70
BH6003	Solid Geology	3.70+

## BH7

7.2.4 NGR co-ordinates for BH7 (no log available) was 442277 112343.



Site, TP and BH location plan



Plate 1: TP2 – wall-robbing trench 2003 during machine-excavation



Plate 2: TP5 – south-facing trench section



Plate 3: TP6 - ditch 6007



Plate 4: BH1 – working shot

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Selected photographs of fieldwork



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