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# Laffan House, Baker Barracks, Thorney Island West Thorney, Chichester, West Sussex

Archaeological Watching Brief Report



Planning Ref: 15/04115/FUL Ref: 54412.02 June 2016

wessexarchaeology



### **Archaeological Watching Brief Report**

Prepared for: Rollalong Ltd. Woolsbridge Industrial Park Three Legged Cross Wimborne Dorset BH21 6SF

> Prepared by: Wessex Archaeology Portway House Old Sarum Park Salisbury Wiltshire SP4 6EB

www.wessexarch.co.uk

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Planning Ref: 15/04115/FUL WA Ref: 54412.02



#### **Quality Assurance**

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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 (WA) was commissioned by Rollalong Ltd to carry out an archaeological watching brief at Baker Barracks, Thorney Island, West Thorney, Chichester, West Sussex, centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 475775 102840.

The archaeological watching brief was carried out between the 30th of March 2016 and the 18th of May 2016. The watching brief constituted of monitoring the excavation of cable and pipe trenches and footings associated with the re-location of Laffan House.

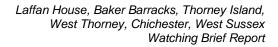
Footings for the new building measured approximately 1 m x 1 m square and a depth of 1 m. They were predominately dug through made ground and made ground, the result of a previous modern building work on the site. The pipe and cable trenches were generally 0.4m to 0.6m deep and were excavated predominately through undisturbed topsoil and subsoil. Only modern features were encountered.



## Archaeological Watching Brief Report

#### Acknowledgements

We would like to thank Stuart Bailey of Rollalong Limited for commissioning the watching brief. The project was managed on behalf of Wessex Archaeology by Bruce Eaton. The fieldwork was undertaken by Mike Cepak, Jamie McCarthy, Phoebe Olsen and Becky Hall and the report written by Peter Capps and Phoebe Olsen and was edited by Bruce Eaton.





### Archaeological Watching Brief Report

#### 1 INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 **Project background**

- 1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology (WA) was commissioned by Rollalong Ltd. (the 'Client') to carry out an archaeological watching brief at Baker Barracks, Thorney Island, West Thorney, Chichester, West Sussex, centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 475775 102840 (hereafter the 'Site') (**Fig. 1**).
- 1.1.2 The archaeological watching brief was commissioned by the Client in response to recommendations issued by the Chichester District Council (CDC) Archaeology Officer with respect to a planning application (ref. 15/04115/FUL) submitted to CDC in December 2015.
- 1.1.3 The aforementioned planning application seeked approval for the re-location of Laffan House, a single storey modular building, from its current site at Keogh Barracks in Aldershot, to Baker Barracks, on Thorney Island, to provide additional accommodation for 16 Regiment to meet Army 2020 requirements.
- 1.1.4 A written scheme of investigation (WSI) was submitted by WA and approved by the local planning authority. The WSI outlined the strategy which would be implemented to carry out the archaeological watching brief.

#### 1.2 Scope of Document

- 1.2.1 This specification sets out the results of the work carried out by WA between the 30th of March and the 18th of May 2016.
- 1.2.2 In format and content this document conforms with current best practice and to the guidance outlined in *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment* (MoRPHE, HE 2015) and the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' (CIfA) *Standard and Guidance: archaeological watching brief* (CIfA 2014a).

#### 1.3 The Site

- 1.3.1 The Site is located in Baker Barracks, an operational Army base located on Thorney Island in the middle of Chichester Harbour in West Sussex, approximately 5 km east of Portsmouth in Hampshire (**Fig. 1**).
- 1.3.2 Thorney Island is effectively a low-lying peninsula cut off from the mainland by a narrow channel called the Great Deep. This channel links the two arms of the Chichester Harbour estuary, which are known as the Emsworth Channel and Thorney Channel respectively.



- 1.3.3 Baker Barracks, which is located on the site of a former RAF airfield, is currently occupied by 12 and 16 Regiments of the Royal Artillery.
- 1.3.4 The Barracks consists of three main areas: the Airfield area, which includes the runways and perimeter tracks of the former RAF airfield; the Technical Zone, which lies in the centre of the island, to the west of the main runway; and West Thorney Village, which lies on the eastern side of the island, and contains the officers mess, the Church of St Nicholas and service family accommodation. The Site is located within the Technical Zone, which contains the former aircraft hangars, training centre, ranges and an assault course, as well as housing and a primary school.
- 1.3.5 The proposed location for the relocated Laffan House is across the road and to the south of the Training Centre; the majority of the Site is existing hardstanding currently used as a car park. It is understood that the Site may have previously been occupied by another building, which has since been demolished.
- 1.3.6 The southwest of Baker Barracks lies at approximately 2.1 m above Ordnance Datum (aOD), rising to approximately 3.3 m to the north and east. The Site is situated at an elevation of approximately 2.5 m aOD.
- 1.3.7 The underlying bedrock geology throughout the Site is mapped as Cretaceous Chalk of the Lewes Nodular Chalk Formation, Seaford Chalk Formation, Newhaven Chalk Formation and Culver Chalk Formation, overlain by superficial deposits comprising river terrace deposits (undifferentiated sand silt and clay) (British Geological Survey, Geology of Britain Viewer; http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html Accessed on 08/03/2015).
- 1.3.8 A historic borehole log from within the base records superficial deposits of brown clay followed by clay and gravel (Reading Beds) and a band of blue clay to approximately 1.5 m below ground level, followed by underlying deposit of marl and Upper Chalk with flints (British Geological Survey borehole log SU70SE7).

#### 2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

#### 2.1 Introduction

- 2.1.1 The following archaeological and historical background to the Site is summarised from the historic environment desk-based assessment (DBA; AECOM 2015), which was prepared and submitted in support of the planning application.
- 2.1.2 The assessment identified a high potential for buried remains dating to the prehistoric and Romano-British periods, potentially including evidence of occupation dating from the Mesolithic to the Bronze Age and a Roman farmstead or villa. It was also noted that there was also a moderate potential for post-medieval remains, likely to be related to farming.
- 2.1.3 It was also suggested that previous ground disturbance may have been relatively limited across the barracks, outside of the footprint of extant and former buildings, and service trenches.

#### Palaeolithic

2.1.4 The DBA highlighted that Thorney Island has the 'potential to contain significant Pleistocene deposits which may harbour information on hominid activity and sea level change', although it was noted that no Palaeolithic remains are currently recorded in the vicinity of the Site (AECOM 2015; p.14).

#### Mesolithic

2.1.5 A large assemblage of worked and burnt flint, including Mesolithic scrapers and flaked tools, was recovered during an archaeological watching brief carried out immediately to the north-east of Baker Barracks (CD10022). The investigation only involved topsoil removal and the subsoil was not fully stripped. It is therefore possible that archaeological remains may have been left *in-situ* below the level that was investigated.

#### Neolithic

2.1.6 Several individual find spots and larger assemblages of worked and burnt flint of likely or possible Neolithic date have been recorded in the Chichester Harbour area (CD169, CD151, CD145, CD673, CD154, CD10022), which may reflect the use of the marshland and creeks for hunting and fishing during this period.

#### Bronze Age

- 2.1.7 Recorded evidence of Bronze Age activity in the vicinity of the Site includes an urned cremation burial (CD152) found some 1.15 km south-east of the centre of Baker Barracks, a Bronze Age flint scatter revealed during an evaluation (CD10019) close to the Church of St Nicholas, and Bronze Age worked flint and pottery found during a watching brief immediately north of the barracks (CD10022). It is possible that the large quantities of burnt flint which have apparently been recovered across the local area may have been associated with Bronze Age burnt mounds.
- 2.1.8 The DBA suggested that the evidence of Bronze Age activity in the area could indicate small scale settlement on Thorney Island, perhaps focussed on the valley sides close to watercourses, including the Thorney Channel, which would have been a river prior to sea level changes in later prehistory (AECOM 2015; p.15).

#### Iron Age

- 2.1.9 Salt production was carried out in the area around Chichester Harbour from the Iron Age through to the post-medieval period, and there are a number of late Iron Age salterns known from Chidham, on the western side of Hayling Island, and on Thorney Island itself, in the vicinity of Prinstead Point, to the north-east of Baker Barracks.
- 2.1.10 Recorded evidence of Iron Age activity in the vicinity of the Site is limited, although sherds of early Iron Age pottery were found during the construction of the Officer's Mess, *c*.880 m south-east of the centre of Baker Barracks (CDC166).
- 2.1.11 The DBA noted that rising sea levels in later prehistory may have rendered the island unsuitable for settlement, and that this could explain the apparent paucity of evidence for Iron Age activity in the local area. However, the DBA also stated that:

*'little modern intrusive investigation and no systematic field survey has been undertaken on the island; this, combined with the fragility of earlier Iron Age pottery, may not accurately reflect the extent or location of Iron Age activity on Thorney Island'* (AECOM 2015, p.16).

#### Romano-British

2.1.12 The wider area surrounding Thorney Island became increasingly densely inhabited during the Romano-British period. The DBA noted that recorded Romano-British remains in the vicinity of the Site comprised a Roman jar and other sherds of pottery found near the



church in West Thorney village (CD164), and the site of a possible Roman villa, located approximately in the southern part of Baker Barracks (CD150, CD149). Evidence for the existence of the possible villa derived from reports of the discovery, during construction of the base and airfield, of a ditch containing a large quantity of pottery, burnt material and roof tile, alongside a metalled road surface. An undated inhumation burial found during the excavation of a service trench within the north-western part of Baker Barracks (CD4139) could also conceivably have been of Romano-British date.

2.1.13 More recently, a watching brief carried out within Baker Barracks by the Southampton City Council Archaeological Unit, close to the officers' quarters, uncovered traces of a probable Romano-British field system, along with residual evidence of prehistoric activity (Pers. Comm. J. Kenney, CDC Archaeology Officer, 08/03/2016).

#### Saxon and medieval

- 2.1.14 There is currently little recorded archaeological evidence of Saxon or medieval activity on Thorney Island or the surrounding area. In the medieval period Thorney Island was still an island, and could only be accessed via a causeway which was inundated by all but the very lowest tides. The DBA noted that the 'land was low-lying and vulnerable to flooding, as documented in a text of 1341 which recorded the ruin of 40 acres of arable and pasture land as a result of flooding' (AECOM 2015; p.17).
- 2.1.15 The Domesday survey of 1086 indicates that the Site was within the Manor of Thorney, part of the chapelry of Bosham, which was as a relatively wealthy landholding with a mixture of meadow and arable land, as well as three mills, one salthouse and a church. It is not clear where this settlement was located, although it may have corresponded with West Thorney village, which was presumably focused around the 12th century Church of St Nicholas (National List entry 1026105).
- 2.1.16 It is likely that much of the landscape beyond the core of local settlements was only sparsely inhabited, and possibly largely covered by woodland, which was gradually opened up for agriculture during the medieval period. As such, the likelihood of encountering significant archaeological remains derived from these periods appears to be limited.

#### Post-medieval to modern

- 2.1.17 Prior to the 19th century, much of the land within the parish of West Thorney was held in common. The location of the Site is likely to have remained rural in character throughout the post-medieval period. The common fields of the village of West Thorney were enclosed following an Act of 1812 and prior to this date would likely have been laid out as an open field system.
- 2.1.18 The Chichester HER includes entries relating to a number of late post-medieval farmsteads on Thorney Island, recorded from late 19th century Ordnance Survey mapping (e.g. CD8509-14, CD126, CD127, CD147-152), all of which have since been demolished.
- 2.1.19 RAF Thorney Island, which was officially opened in 1938, was one of a number of new military airfields built in the 1930s. The land was purchased from the Thorney Manor Estate, including arable land, a sizeable manor house and the village. With the exception of the church, almost all of the existing buildings were demolished to make way for the airfield.



- 2.1.20 The Chichester HER includes a number of records relating to military features associated with the former RAF Airfield and the associated Second World War defences such as gun emplacements, weapons dumps and defensive walls, many of which are no longer extant.
- 2.1.21 The airfield remained operational until 1975, after which the site was used to temporarily house Vietnamese refugees. The Army acquired the site in 1985, following the departure of the refugees. The site was subsequently altered and remodelled to meet the requirements of the Royal Artillery, in a process which involved the conversion of existing buildings and new constructions, including both military and domestic buildings.

#### 3 METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 All work undertaken was carried out in accordance with the methodology outlined in the WSI (WA 2016). What follows is a summary of the methodology employed by WA.

#### 3.2 Aims and objectives

- 3.2.1 With due regard to the ClfA Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief (ClfA 2014a), the principle aim of the archaeological watching brief was to record the archaeological resource during development using appropriate methods and practices, and in compliance with the *Code of conduct* and other relevant by-laws of ClfA.
- 3.2.2 In furtherance of the project aim, the following objectives were defined:
  - to allow, within the resources available, the preservation by record of archaeological deposits, the presence and nature of which could not be established (or established with sufficient accuracy) in advance of development or other potentially disruptive works; including
  - to ensure their preservation by record to the highest possible standard;
  - to confirm the approximate date or date range of the remains, by means of artefactual or other evidence;
  - to determine or confirm the approximate extent of any remains;
  - to determine the condition and state of preservation of the remains; and
  - to determine the degree of complexity of the horizontal and/or vertical stratigraphy present.
  - to provide an opportunity, if needed, for the watching archaeologist to signal to all interested parties, before the destruction of the material in question, that an archaeological find has been made for which the resources allocated to the watching brief itself are not sufficient to support treatment to a satisfactory and proper standard; and
  - to prepare a report on the results of the watching brief.



#### 3.3 Health and Safety

- 3.3.1 Health and Safety considerations were of paramount importance when conducting the fieldwork. Safe working practices overrode archaeological considerations at all times.
- 3.3.2 All work was carried out in accordance with the *Health and Safety at Work etc. Act* 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety Regulations 1992, and all other relevant Health and Safety legislation, regulations and codes of practice in force at the time.
- 3.3.3 Wessex Archaeology supplied a copy of their Health and Safety Policy and a Risk Assessment to the Client before the commencement of any fieldwork. The Risk Assessment was read and understood by all staff attending the Site before any groundwork commenced.
- 3.3.4 Wessex Archaeology staff complied with the standard PPE requirements for working on construction sites (hard hat, steel toe capped boots, high visibility clothing) and any specific requirements of the Principal Contractor.

#### 3.4 Fieldwork methodology

- 3.4.1 The following methodology was proposed in order to meet the aims and objectives of the watching brief at the Site. All works were carried out in accordance with the CIfA's Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief (CIfA 2014a), excepting where superseded by statements made below.
- 3.4.2 The fieldwork consisted of the monitoring of groundwork and ground reduction, including excavations associated with new foundations, service runs and drainage works, through previously undisturbed soils.
- 3.4.3 The watching brief was undertaken by at least one experienced archaeologist at any one time. The mechanical excavation was under constant supervision by Wessex Archaeology. Machine excavation proceeded to the required construction levels or the top of archaeological levels whichever was the higher.
- 3.4.4 No complex archaeological deposits or features, including human remains were revealed. As such it was not required to halt the groundwork at any time.
- 3.4.5 The watching brief was maintained throughout initial excavations and was concluded when, in consultation with the CDC Archaeology Officer, it was clear that the potential for archaeological remains to be exposed had been exhausted.

#### 4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS

#### 4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 No archaeological deposits or features were encountered during the watching brief. Modern walls and drains were revelled in a number of the areas monitored and are detailed below and in fig. 2 & 3.

#### 4.2 Results

4.2.1 The footings and trenches were predominantly dug through made or disturbed ground, which was approximately 0.4 m to 0.5 m in thickness, below the topsoil/turf which measured approximately 0.1 m thick across site. This made and disturbed ground was

formed from dumps of rubble and building material, directly relating to a pre-existent building on the site, or a greyish mid brown silty clay with common chalk and ceramic building material inclusions, also related to previous building or demolition works. The underlying natural geology was encountered at approximately 0.5 m to 0.6 m below the ground level and comprised a yellowish mid brown sandy clay (**Plate 1 & 2**).

- 4.2.2 The initial phase of the watching brief comprised of monitoring the excavations of footings for concrete pads on which the new building, Laffan House, would sit. The footings were laid out in a grid across the footprint of the building (**Fig. 2**). The smallest of these footings measured 1 m by 1 m and the largest measured 1.4 m by 2.3 m. They ranged from 0.8 m to 1.4 m in depth.
- 4.2.3 No archaeological features or deposits were encountered, however, a number of modern walls were revealed, such as in the footings excavated for **Pad 58** (**Plate 3, Fig. 2**). There were also other modern features, as in **Pad 65** (**Plate 4, Fig. 2**) where both a modern pipe and concrete slab were encountered.
- 4.2.4 The second stage of work was monitoring the excavation of pipe and cable trenches related to the new building. These were between 0.3 m and 0.6 m in depth (**Fig. 3**).
- 4.2.5 The cable and pipe trenches were generally excavated through the same made ground encountered in the pad footings. Where undisturbed ground was encountered it was made up of a mid-brown sandy loam topsoil with turf and rooting throughout (0.1 m thick); mid greyish brown sandy clay loam subsoil with rooting throughout and occasional small to medium sized sub angular to sub rounded stones (0.3 m to 0.4 m thick); and a yellowish light brown sandy clay natural with patches of flint nodules (**Fig. 3, Plate 5**).
- 4.2.6 A number of modern brick built walls and other modern features were encountered during the monitoring of the pipe and cables trenches. As with those encountered during the monitoring of the pad footings these are of modern buildings known to have existed on site (**Fig. 3, Plate 6**)

#### 5 ARTEFACTUAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE

#### 5.1 Summary

5.1.1 No artefacts were recovered during the monitoring works and no environmental samples were taken.

#### 6 DISCUSSION

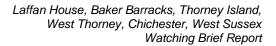
#### 6.1 Summary

6.1.1 No archaeological features or deposits were encountered during the monitoring. A number of modern features were recorded and are likely to relate to modern buildings known to have existed on the Site. It is likely that the construction of these modern buildings and their subsequent demolition removed any potential archaeology.

#### 7 STORAGE AND CURATION

#### 7.1 Museum

7.1.1 It has been recommended that the project archive resulting from the watching brief be deposited with the Chichester Museum.



#### 7.2 Archive

- 7.2.1 The complete Site archive, which will include paper records, photographic records, graphics and digital data, will be prepared following the standard conditions for the acceptance of excavated archaeological material by the appropriate Museum, and in general following nationally recommended guidelines (SMA 1995; Brown 2011; ADS 2013; ClfA 2014b).
- 7.2.2 All archive elements will be marked with the Site/accession code and a full index will be prepared.

#### 7.3 Storage

- 7.3.1 The site archive will be prepared for long-term storage in accordance with current guidelines (e.g. Walker 1990; MGC 1994 etc.). It is proposed in principle that, subject to the wishes of the landowner, the entire archive (including the finds) will be donated to and deposited with the Chichester Museum. Provision has been made for the cost of long term storage in the post-fieldwork costs.
- 7.3.2 Until final deposition with the museum the archive will be stored at the offices of Wessex Archaeology Southern Region in Salisbury.

#### 7.4 Security copy

7.4.1 In line with current best practice (*e.g.* Brown 2011), on completion of the project a security copy of the written records will be prepared, in the form of a digital PDF/A file. PDF/A is an ISO-standardised version of the Portable Document Format (PDF) designed for the digital preservation of electronic documents through omission of features ill-suited to long-term archiving.

#### 7.5 Copyright

7.5.1 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 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 to the *Copyright and Related Right Regulations* 2003.

#### 8 **REFERENCES**

#### 8.1 Bibliography

- AECOM 2015 Historic Environment Desk-based Assessment. Baker Barracks, Thorney Island, West Thorney, Chichester, West Sussex. Unpublished Client Report ref. 47074211.
- Archaeology Data Service [ADS] 2013 Caring for Digital Data in Archaeology: a guide to good practice, Archaeology Data Service & Digital Antiquity Guides to Good Practice
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  - 2014b Standard and guidance for the creation, compilation, transfer and deposition of archaeological archives, Institute for Archaeologists
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- Wessex Archaeology [WA] 2016 Laffan House, Baker Barracks, Thorney Island, West Thorney, Chichester, West Sussex: Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief, WA Ref T21538.01

#### 9 APPENDICES

### 9.1 Appendix 3: OASIS form

#### OASIS ID: wessexar1-254097

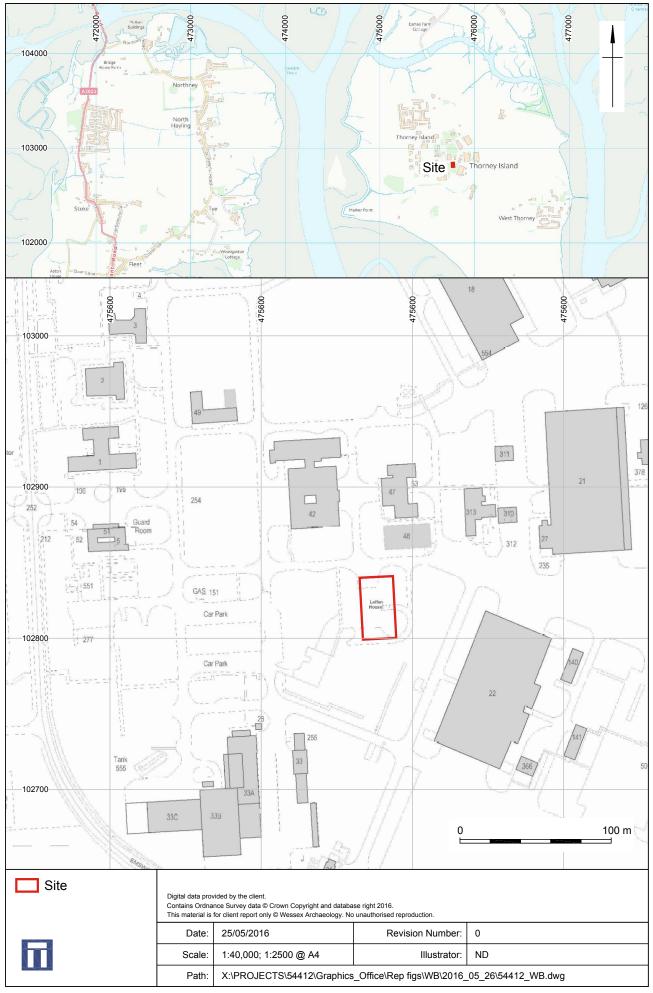
Project details	
Project name	Laffan House Archaeological Watching Brief Report
Short description of the project	Wessex Archaeology (WA) was commissioned by Rollalong Ltd (the 'Client') to carry out an archaeological watching brief at Baker Barracks, Thorney Island, West Thorney, Chichester, West Sussex, centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 475775 102840 (hereafter the 'Site') The archaeological watching brief was carried out between the 30th of March 2016 and the 18th of May 2016. The watching brief constituted of monitoring the excavation of cable and pipe trenches and footings associated with the re-location of Laffan House. Footings for the new building measured approximately 1 m x 1 m square and a depth of 1 m. They were mostly dug through made ground and made ground, the result of a previous modern building on the site. The pipe and cable trenches were generally 0.4m to 0.6m deep and mostly through undisturbed topsoil and subsoil. Only modern features were encountered.
Project dates	Start: 30-03-2016 End: 20-05-2016
Previous/future work	Yes / No
Any associated project reference codes	15/04115/FUL - Planning Application No.
Any associated project reference codes	54412 - Sitecode
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	None
Current Land use	Vacant Land 1 - Vacant land previously developed
Monument type	N/A None
Significant Finds	N/A None
Investigation type	"Watching Brief"
Prompt	Planning condition
Project location	
Country	England
Site location	WEST SUSSEX CHICHESTER WEST THORNEY Laffan House, Baker Barracks, Thorney Island, West Thorney, Chichester, West Sussex
Postcode	PO10 8DH
Study area	0 Square metres

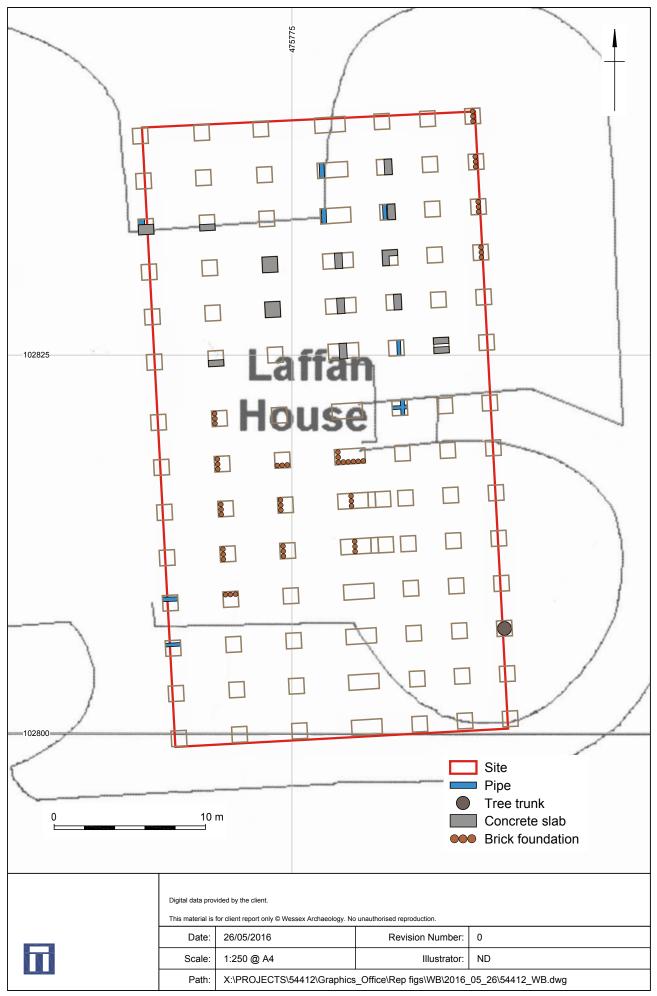


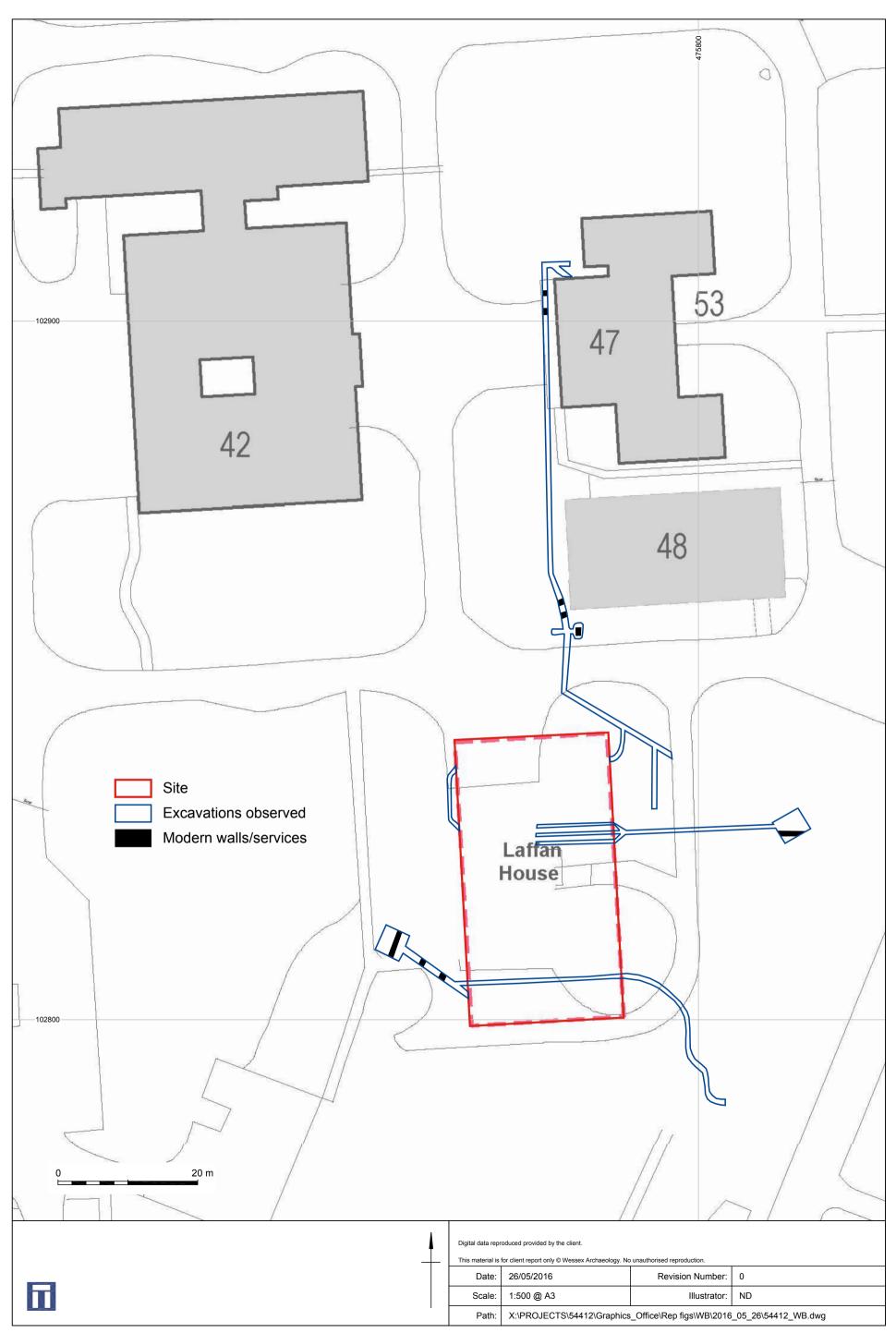
Site coordinates	SU 475777 102829 50.889515478834 -1.32349849028 50 53 22 N 001 19 24 W Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 2.5m Max: 2.5m
Project creators	
Name of Organisation	Wessex Archaeology
Project brief originator	Rollalong Ltd
Project design originator	Wessex archaeology
Project director/manager	Bruce Eaton
Project supervisor	Phoebe Olsen, Mike Cepak
Project supervisor	Jamie McCarthy
Project supervisor	Rebecca Hall
Type of sponsor/funding body	construction company
Name of sponsor/funding body	Rollalong Ltd
Project archives	
Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive recipient	Chichester Museum
Digital Archive ID	54412
Digital Contents	"none"
Digital Media available	"Database","Images raster / digital photography"
Paper Archive recipient	Chichester Museum
Paper Archive ID	54412
Paper Contents	"none"
Paper Media available	"Context sheet","Drawing","Map","Notebook - Excavation',' Research',' General Notes","Plan","Report","Unspecified Archive"

#### Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)				
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Plan of Site and the cable pipe trenches monitored



Plate 1: South west facing section of pipe trench



Plate 2: West facing section of footing for Pad 46

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Plate 3: East facing section of footing for Pad 58



Plate 4: West facing section of footing for Pad 65

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Plate 5: Pipe trench from the north



Plate 6: Modern wall in pipe trench

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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



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