

Mees House, Old Redbridge Road Southampton, Hampshire

Archaeological Watching Brief



Planning Ref: /01219/FUL, 16/01220/LBC Accession Code: SOU 1774 Ref: 114580.02 October 2017



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Client name HSR Design

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On behalf of

Address

Site location Mees House,

County Hampshire

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Statutory designations

Planning authority Southampton City Council

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Museum name Southampton City Council Archaeological Collections

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1

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Summary

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by HSR Design, acting on behalf of to undertake an archaeological watching brief in association with the erection of a single storey rear extension at Mees House, Southampton, Hampshire. The work was carried out in response to planning conditions (refs: 16/01219/FUL, 16/01220/LBC) placed on the development by Southampton City Council. Archaeological monitoring of the hand-excavated foundation trench was carried out on 9th and 13th October 2017.

No archaeological features or deposits were recorded during the course of the watching brief. Several areas of truncation and disturbance, predominantly by the location of several services, were noted. The presence of small amounts of post-medieval redeposited pottery would suggest that there was some amount of activity in the area, in association with Mees House itself.

Acknowledgements

Wessex Archaeology would like to thank HSR Design , for commissioning the archaeological watching brief. Wessex Archaeology is also grateful for the advice of Kevin White, who monitored the project for Southampton City Council, and to Andy Such for his cooperation and help on site.

The fieldwork was undertaken by Gareth Chaffey, who also prepared this report. The finds were identified by Lorraine Mepham and the graphics prepared by Nancy Dixon. The project was managed on behalf of Wessex Archaeology by Gareth Chaffey.



Mees House, Old Redbridge Road Southampton, Hampshire

Archaeological Watching Brief

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project background

- 1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by HSR Design, acting on behalf of the 'Client'), to undertake an archaeological watching brief in association with the erection of a single storey rear extension at Mees House, Southampton, Hampshire centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 437270 113680 (hereafter the 'Site') (**Fig. 1**).
- 1.1.2 The proposed extension will be a contemporary glazed design using traditional materials of an oak frame and standing seam zinc roof. It is intended to complement Mees House, a Grade II Listed Building.
- 1.1.3 A planning application for the works has been submitted to Southampton City Council (SCC) (application number 16/01219/FUL, submitted in conjunction with 16/01220/LBC). The requirement for a programme of archaeological monitoring via watching brief was identified as a condition (Condition 3) of the planning consent issued by SCC to accompany the aforementioned development:
 - 03. Archaeological evaluation/watching brief work programme (Performance)
 The developer will secure the completion of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that the archaeological investigation is completed

- 1.1.4 A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for the archaeological watching brief (Wessex Archaeology 2016) was approved by the client and Historic Environment Group Leader for SCC prior to the start of the fieldwork. The watching brief was conducted in accordance with the guidelines and standards outlined in the Chartered Institute for Archaeologist's Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief (CIfA 2014a).
- 1.1.5 The watching brief was undertaken on the 9th and 13th October 2017.

1.2 Scope of the report

1.2.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the results of the watching brief, to interpret the results within their local or regional context (or otherwise), and to assess their potential to address the aims outlined in the WSI, thereby making available information about the archaeological resource (a preservation by record).

1.3 Location, topography and geology

1.3.1 The Site is located on the western edge of Southampton in the district of Redbridge. The Site comprises a 0.04 ha parcel of land to the north of Old Redbridge Road and is bounded to the west by an industrial unit and to the north by a car dealership (**Fig. 1**). The



house is located on the western end of a terrace of four set back from the road and screened by established planting. The western boundary is defined by a 2 m high wall.

1.3.2 The underlying geology of the Site is mapped as sand, silt and clay of Wittering Formation (British Geological Survey, Geology of Britain Viewer).

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 A summary of the archaeological and historical background to the Site is discussed below informed by a search of the National Heritage List for England (NHLE), the Southampton Historic Environment Record (SHER) and the National Record of the Historic Environment (available via PastScape).

2.2 Mees House

2.2.1 Mees House (NHLE 1092026) is a Grade II Listed Building, forming the western end of a terrace of four dwellings (Mees House, The Cottage, Hazeldene and The Nook). The formal listing description is:

C18 range, not uniform. Two storeys. Mees House of red brick. The Cottage grey brick with red brick dressings and Hazeldene and The Nook now painted brick. Old tiled roof and eaves cornice. Ten windows in all with cambered stone heads and keystones. C19 sashes to left; iron casements with glazing bars to right. Early C19 Tuscan columned porch to Mees House. Hoods on brackets to other houses.

2.3 Archaeological and historical context

Prehistoric (970,000 BC - AD 43)

- 2.3.1 Although little confirmed prehistoric activity is known in the immediate vicinity of the Site a number of artefacts have been found indicating activity in this area during these periods.
- 2.3.2 A collection of Palaeolithic flint tools including at least twenty handaxes are recorded as being found in the location of Redbridge in the 19th and early 20th century, although the exact location of many of these finds is unknown (SHER MSH490). Palaeolithic material is often associated with specific geological deposits with at least several of these discoveries associated with the terrace 1 river gravels (PastScape 1097003). A Neolithic axe is also recorded as being found in this area (SHER MSH4916).
- 2.3.3 During archaeological investigations at 45 Old Redbridge Road, now 49 Redbridge Road, a number of worked flints were found residually in later contexts, which were thought to date to the Palaeolithic, Mesolithic and Neolithic periods (SHER MSH2332).
- 2.3.4 A Bronze Age palstave axe (PastScape 226834) and flint spearhead (PastScape 226818) are recorded as being recovered from the Redbridge and Maybush estates respectively.

Romano-British (AD43 – 410)

2.3.5 During a watching brief at Ivy House, Old Redbridge Road unstratified Roman pottery and tile was discovered which may be associated with pre-17th century buried soil horizons located within the site (SHER MSH575). Two undated posthole were also found which pre-dated the post-medieval activity.



- Saxon and medieval (410 1500)
- 2.3.6 Redbridge is recorded in the 1086 Domesday Survey as a small settlement with two mills, with Millbrook to the east and Totton to the west also recorded. The village of Redbridge or 'reed bridge' is thought to have originated in the Saxon period, associated with a bridge across the lowest crossing point on the river, and thus an important road route (SHER MSH494).
- 2.3.7 Late Saxon and medieval activity has been located during archaeological investigations at 49 Old Redbridge Road (SHER MSH2714, MSH2715) and Ivy House (MSH574). 13th century fabric is also noted in the post-medieval Ship Inn (NHLE 1178961), which lies to the west of the Site.
 - Post-medieval, 19th century and modern (1500 present day)
- 2.3.8 In addition to Mees House itself (NHLE 1092026), several other post-medieval properties are situated in this area including The Ship Inn (NHLE 1178961) and Ivy House (NHLE 1339988). The Redbridge bridge dates to 17th century but is thought to have been constructed on the site of an earlier structure (NHLE 1091972).
- 2.3.9 From the late 17th century and into the 19th century a ship yard and ship building activity was located at Redbridge (SHER MST4399) and the route of the former Southampton to Redbridge canal, passed to the east of Redbridge (SHER MST519).
- 2.3.10 The 1st edition Ordnance Survey map (1882-1883) shows the village as a linear settlement focused on the main east west road which leads to the bridge crossing. The Site and adjacent properties can be seen opposite a terrace of six railway cottages (SHER MSH3560).
- 2.3.11 Due to the strategic important of the river crossing several pillboxes were constructed to guard the bridges during the Second World War (SHER MSH91, MSH92).

3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

3.1 Aims

- 3.1.1 The aims of the watching brief, as stated in the WSI (Wessex Archaeology 2016) and as defined in the ClfA's *Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (ClfA 2014a), were:
 - 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 the development or other works;
 - 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 guide, not replace, any requirement for contingent excavation or preservation of possible deposits.



4 METHODS

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 All works were undertaken in accordance with the detailed methodology set out within the WSI (Wessex Archaeology 2016) and in general compliance with the standards outlined in CIfA guidance (CIfA 2014a). The methods employed are summarised below.

4.2 Fieldwork methods

General

- 4.2.1 The watching brief focused on the excavation of a single 'L'-shaped trench which formed the foundations for the proposed extension (**Fig. 1**, **Plate 1**). The trench was excavated by hand under the constant supervision of the monitoring archaeologist (**Plate 2**). Where necessary, the surface of any uncovered and undisturbed archaeological deposits were cleaned by hand, sufficient to address the aims of the watching brief. Following excavation of the trench, the internal space was reduced to a depth of approximately 0.40 m to form the level of the new floor surface, whilst the areas immediately external to the trench was reduced by *c*. 0.30 m to accommodate new drainage.
- 4.2.2 Spoil derived from the trench was visually scanned for the purposes of finds retrieval. Where found, artefacts were collected and bagged by context. All artefacts from excavated contexts were retained, although those from features of modern date (19th century or later) were recorded on site and not retained.

Recording

- 4.2.3 All exposed archaeological deposits and features were recorded using Wessex Archaeology's *pro forma* recording system.
- 4.2.4 A full photographic record was made using digital cameras equipped with an image sensor of not less than 10 megapixels. Digital images have been subject to managed quality control and curation processes, which has embedded appropriate metadata within the image and will ensure long term accessibility of the image set.

4.3 Artefactual and environmental strategies

4.3.1 Appropriate strategies for the recovery, processing and assessment of artefacts and environmental samples were in line with those detailed in the WSI (Wessex Archaeology 2016). The treatment of artefacts and environmental remains was in general accordance with: Guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials (ClfA 2014b) and Environmental Archaeology: A Guide to the Theory and Practice of Methods, from Sampling and Recovery to Post-excavation (English Heritage 2011).

4.4 Health and Safety

- 4.4.1 Health and safety considerations were of paramount importance in conducting all fieldwork. Safe working practices override archaeological considerations at all times.
- 4.4.2 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.



5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 The following section provides a summary of the information contained within the Site archive.

5.2 Soil sequence and natural deposits

5.2.1 The soil sequence was consistent across the Site. A fine topsoil was found directly beneath stone slab which covered the development area. This overlay a mid-brown garden soil with abundant rooting throughout. In isolated places, an undisturbed subsoil was recorded. Mid reddish brown in colour, the silty clay deposit contained rare stone inclusions and root disturbance. This overlay a compact gravel natural geology (**Plates 3** and **4**).

5.3 Results

- 5.3.1 No archaeological features or deposits were noted. The Site was heavily truncated, predominantly by the large number of services (including water and gas) which relate to Mees House. Small areas of seemingly undisturbed stratigraphic sequences were noted in places and recorded as appropriate.
- 5.3.2 It is highly likely that the insertion of the services may have truncated any earlier archaeological deposits (**Plate 5**).

6 ARTEFACTUAL EVIDENCE

6.1.1 No stratified finds were recovered. Unstratified finds observed on site during the watching brief included small quantities of post-medieval pottery (Verwood-type earthenware and German stoneware) and clay pipe stems, suggesting a date range of 17th/18th century, with an absence of any definitively modern (19th-/20th-century material). These finds were not retained.

7 ENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE

7.1.1 No archaeological deposits suitable for environmental sampling were identified during the watching brief.

8 CONCLUSIONS

8.1.1 No archaeological features or deposits were observed during the archaeological watching brief. All artefacts observed were of post-medieval date, in keeping with the date of Mees House, but all were unstratified. The observation of the hand removal of deposits to the required construction formation level demonstrated that the deposits underlying the topsoil consisted of modern made ground. Almost all of the stratigraphy monitored during the excavation of the foundation trench was seen to have been heavily disturbed and truncated by several services which have been inserted in the recent past.

9 ARCHIVE STORAGE AND CURATION

9.1 Archive

9.1.1 The archive resulting from the watching brief is currently held at the offices of Wessex Archaeology in Salisbury. Southampton Museum has agreed in principle to accept the archive on completion of the project, under the site code **SOU1774**.



9.2 Preparation of the archive

- 9.2.1 The archive, which includes paper records, graphics and digital data, will be prepared following the standard conditions for the acceptance of excavated archaeological material by Southampton Museum, and in general following nationally recommended guidelines (SMA 1995; ClfA 2014c; Brown 2011; ADS 2013).
- 9.2.2 All archive elements will be marked with the site code SOU1774, and a full index will be prepared. The physical archive currently comprises the following:
 - 1 file/document cases of paper records and A3/A4 graphics;

9.3 Security copy

9.3.1 In line with current best practice (eg, 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.

9.4 OASIS

9.4.1 An OASIS online record (http://oasis.ac.uk/pages/wiki/Main) has been initiated, with key fields and a .pdf version of the final report submitted. Subject to any contractual requirements on confidentiality, copies of the OASIS record will be integrated into the relevant local and national records and published through the Archaeology Data Service ArchSearch catalogue.

10 COPYRIGHT

10.1 Archive and report copyright

- 10.1.1 The full copyright of the written/illustrative/digital archive relating to the project will be retained by Wessex Archaeology under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 with all rights reserved. The client will be licenced to use each report for the purposes that it was produced in relation to the project as described in the specification. 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 conforms to the Copyright and Related Rights Regulations 2003. In some instances, certain regional museums may require absolute transfer of copyright, rather than a licence; this should be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.
- 10.1.2 Information relating to the project will be deposited with the Historic Environment Record (HER) where it can be freely copied without reference to Wessex Archaeology for the purposes of archaeological research or development control within the planning process.

10.2 Third party data copyright

10.2.1 This document and the project archive may contain material that is non-Wessex Archaeology copyright (eg, Ordnance Survey, British Geological Survey, Crown Copyright), or the intellectual property of third parties, which Wessex Archaeology are able to provide for limited reproduction under the terms of our own copyright licences, but for which copyright itself is non-transferable by Wessex Archaeology. Users remain bound by the conditions of the *Copyright, Designs and Patents Act* 1988 with regard to multiple copying and electronic dissemination of such material.



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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: OASIS form

OASIS ID: wessexar1-299299

Project details

Project name Mees House, Old Redbridge Road, Southampton

Short description of the project

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by HSR Design, acting on behalf of to undertake an archaeological watching brief in association with the erection of a single storey rear extension at Mees House, , Southampton,

Hampshire. The work was carried out in response to planning conditions (refs:

16/01219/FUL, 16/01220/LBC) placed on the development by Southampton City Council. Archaeological monitoring of the hand-excavated foundation trench was carried out on 9th and 13th October 2017. No archaeological features or deposits were recorded during

the course of the watching brief. Several areas of truncation and disturbance,

predominantly by the location of several services, were noted. The presence of small amounts of post-medieval redeposited pottery would suggest that there was some

amount of activity in the area, in association with Mees House itself.

Project dates Start: 09-10-2017 End: 13-10-2017

Previous/future work No / No

Any associated project reference codes

114580 - Sitecode

Any associated

codes

project reference

SOU 1774 - Museum accession ID

Any associated project reference

codes

16/01219/FUL - Planning Application No.

Type of project

Recording project

Site status

Listed Building

Current Land use

Residential 1 - General Residential

Monument type

NONE None

Significant Finds

NONE None

Investigation type

"Watching Brief"

Prompt

Planning condition

Project location

Country

England

Site location

HAMPSHIRE SOUTHAMPTON SOUTHAMPTON Mees House, Old Redbridge Road,

Southampton



Postcode SO15 0NJ

Study area 0 Hectares

Site coordinates SU 437273 113671 50.899570068722 -1.378113424084 50 53 58 N 001 22 41 W Point

Lat/Long Datum Unknown

Project creators

Name of Organisation

Wessex Archaeology

Project brief originator

Wessex Archaeology

Project design originator

Wessex archaeology

Project

director/manager

Gareth Chaffey

Project supervisor Gareth Chaffey

Type of sponsor/funding

sponsor/fur body Private houseowner

Project archives

Physical Archive Exists?

No

Digital Archive recipient

Southampton City Museum Service

Digital Archive ID S

SOU1774

Digital Contents

"other"

Digital Media available

"Images raster / digital photography","Text"

Paper Archive

recipient

Southampton City Museum Service

Paper Archive ID

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Paper Contents

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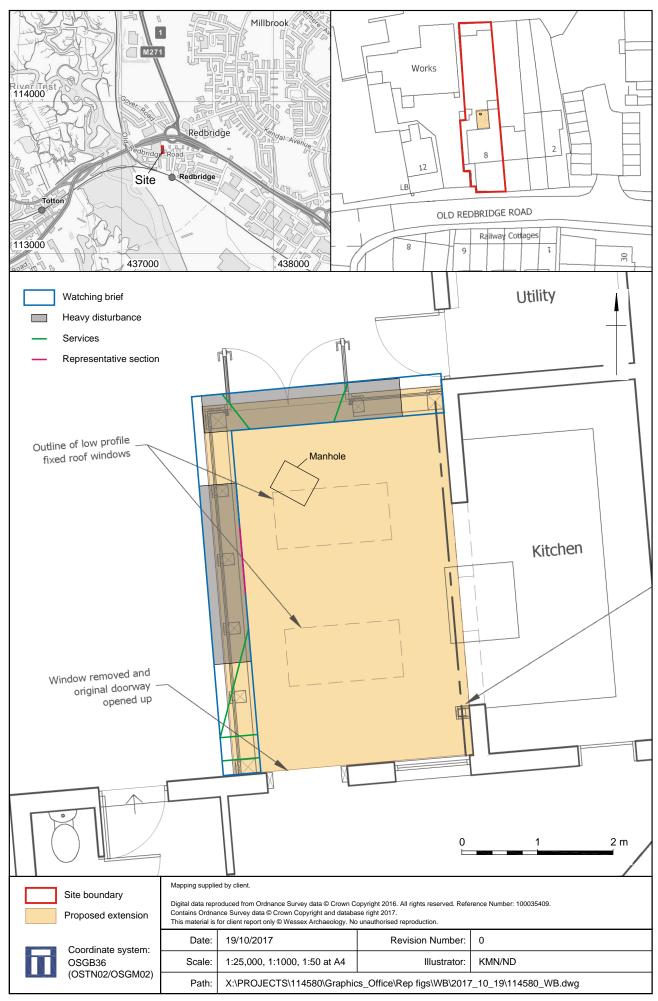




Plate 1: Watching brief area to be monitored, view from north-west



Plate 2: Working shot during excavation of footings, view from north-east



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Plate 3: West facing representative section of footing trench



Plate 4: View of foundations of existing building with natural gravel geology, view from west

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Plate 5: Working shot of final reduced levels, view from north

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