



5 Villier's Court, Winchester, Hampshire

Watching Brief Report



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Portway House
Old Sarum Park
Salisbury
Wiltshire
SP4 6EB

www.wessexarch.co.uk

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Address County House
Easton Lane
Winnall
Winchester
Hampshire
SO23 7RU

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County Hampshire
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Planning reference 19/01933/HOU
Museum name Winchester City Council (Hampshire Cultural Trust)
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Fieldwork directed by Steven Froud
Project management by Simon Cleggett
Document compiled by Lee Newton and Steven Froud
Edited by Tom Wells
Graphics by Ken Lymer

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Contents

Summary	ii
Acknowledgements.....	ii
1 INTRODUCTION	3
1.1 Project and planning background.....	3
1.2 Scope of the report	4
1.3 Location, topography and geology	4
2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND.....	4
2.1 Archaeological and historical context.....	4
3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES.....	6
3.1 Aims	6
3.2 Objectives.....	7
4 METHODS.....	7
4.1 Introduction.....	7
4.2 Fieldwork methods.....	7
4.3 Artefactual and environmental strategies	8
4.4 Monitoring.....	8
5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS	8
5.1 Introduction.....	8
5.2 Stratigraphic sequence	8
6 CONCLUSIONS	8
6.1 Summary and discussion.....	8
7 ARCHIVE STORAGE AND CURATION.....	9
7.1 Museum.....	9
7.2 Preparation of the archive	9
7.3 Selection policy.....	9
7.4 Security copy	9
7.5 OASIS	9
8 COPYRIGHT	9
8.1 Archive and report copyright	9
8.2 Third party data copyright	10
REFERENCES	11
Appendix 1 OASIS record.....	12

List of Figures

- Figure 1** Site location
Figure 2 Detail of watching brief area

List of Plates

- Cover** Watching brief area prior to excavation
Plate 1 The monitored area photographed from the south-west
Plate 2 North east facing section 1 along foundation trench. 1 x 1 m scale
Plate 3 North west facing section 2 along foundation trench. 1 x 1 m scale
Plate 4 Retaining wall for disused brick steps beneath patio. North west facing. 1 x 2 m scale
Plate 5 Working shot of foundation trench excavations, photographed from the south-west



Summary

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by County Windows to conduct an archaeological watching brief during groundworks associated with the construction of a conservatory at 5 Villiers Court, St Thomas Street, Winchester, SO23 9HQ, centred on NGR 447931 129268. The watching brief was carried out as a condition of planning permission, granted by Winchester City Council (19/01933/HOU).

Despite the potential for Roman, Saxon and medieval remains to be present, no archaeologically significant finds, features or deposits were uncovered during the watching brief as the monitored groundworks did not extend below modern deposits.

Acknowledgements

Wessex Archaeology would like to thank County Windows for commissioning the watching brief, in particular Rob Gilkes. Wessex Archaeology is also grateful for the advice of Tracy Matthews, Historic Environment (Archaeology) Officer, who monitored the project for Winchester City Council.



5 Villiers Court Winchester, Hampshire

Archaeological Watching Brief

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project and planning background

1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by County Windows ('the client') to undertake an archaeological watching brief during groundworks associated with the construction of a conservatory at 5 Villiers Court, St Thomas Street, Winchester, SO23 9HQ, centred on NGR 447931 129268 (**Fig. 1**).

1.1.1 The watching brief was carried out as a condition of planning permission, granted by Winchester City Council (WCC; ref. 19/01933/HOU) on 25 October 2019, subject to conditions. The following conditions related to archaeology:

Condition 5

No development or any works of site preparation shall take place until the applicant or their agents or successors in title have implemented of a programme of archaeological mitigation works, in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation approved by the LPA. The Written Scheme of Investigation shall include:

- *The programme and methodology of site investigation and recording,*
- *Provision for post investigation assessment, reporting and dissemination,*
- *Provision to be made for deposition of the analysis and records of the site investigation (archive),*
- *Nomination of a competent person or persons/organisation to undertake the works set out within the Written Scheme of Investigation.*

Reason: To mitigate the effect of the development upon any heritage assets and to ensure that information regarding these heritage assets is preserved by record for future generations, Policy DM26 Winchester District Local Plan Part 2; Policy CP20 of the Winchester District Joint Core Strategy.

Condition 6

Following completion of archaeological fieldwork, within 9 months (unless otherwise agreed in writing) a report will be produced in accordance with an approved programme including where appropriate post-excavation assessment, specialist analysis and reports and publication. The report shall be submitted to and approved by the local authority.

Reason: To ensure that evidence from the historic environment contributing to our knowledge and understanding of our past is captured and made publicly available. Policy DM26 Winchester District Local Plan Part 2; Policy CP20 of the Winchester District Joint Core Strategy.

1.1.2 The watching brief was carried out in accordance with a written scheme of investigation (WSI), which detailed the aims, methodologies and standards to be employed (Wessex Archaeology 2019). The WCC Historic Environment (Archaeology) Officer approved the



WSI on behalf of the Local Planning Authority (LPA) prior to the fieldwork. The watching brief was undertaken on 3 December 2019.

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, 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 watching brief was carried out immediately to the rear of 5 Villiers Court, towards the southern end of St Thomas Street, Winchester. The property lies on the western side of the residential road, approximately 200 m west of Winchester Cathedral. The site boundaries coincide with those of the property, with a car parking area to the west and more properties to the north and south. The area lies within 100 m of the Roman and medieval town defences.
- 1.3.2 Ground level within the site is at approximately 49 m OD. The bedrock geology is Chalk of the New Pit and Lewes Nodular Chalk Formations. No superficial deposits are recorded within the site (British Geological Survey online viewer).

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Archaeological and historical context

Prehistoric (970,000 BC – AD 43)

- 2.1.1 Whilst there is sporadic evidence of early prehistoric activity in the wider area, exceptionally little has been found within the vicinity of the site. Certainly, compared to the later development of the town, early prehistoric activity within Winchester remains poorly understood. Evidence of later prehistoric activity, however, is much more visible. The substantial enclosure known as Oram's Arbour, to the north-west of Villiers Court, is believed to have been constructed in the Middle Iron Age, and occasional traces of Bronze Age funerary activity and occupation have also been identified in the area. The function of the enclosure remains ambiguous, although it probably formed the focus of activity within an otherwise largely agricultural landscape, dominated by field systems interspersed with smaller settlements.
- 2.1.2 Despite the number of investigations previously undertaken close to the site, little evidence of pre-Roman activity has been observed. Trial trenching at 4a St Swithun Street (Winchester UAD ref. EWC11138), approximately 250 m south-east of the site, produced Iron Age worked and burnt flint from a buried soil below the Roman town's defensive rampart. No other indications of pre-Roman activity are recorded in the immediate area.

Romano-British (AD 43 – 410)

- 2.1.3 Occupation of the Roman town (*Venta Belgarum*) dates from around AD 50. The town appears to have supplanted the settlement at Oram's Arbour, with no sign of having any earlier military precursor. As such it is likely that the town was founded as a purely civilian settlement. An earthen rampart and ditch constructed from around AD 69–70 comprised the earliest defences, which enclosed the 58 hectares. A masonry wall was added by the early 3rd century.

- 2.1.4 Villiers Court is located within the intramural area, approximately 90 m north of the southern line of the Roman defences (MWC6489), with the Roman road from Winchester to *Claesentum* (Bitterne) (MWC6683) to the west. The road left the town at the South Gate (MWC6657) and is thought to follow a straight course coinciding with St Cross Road.
- 2.1.5 Numerous investigations within the intramural area have uncovered significant, complex and deeply stratified archaeological remains relating to the occupation and development of the Roman town, often at highly varied depths below the modern ground surface. These include remains recorded during the excavations undertaken in the 1980s at Lions Hall (the Henly's Garage site; EWC10570 / EWC11253-4 / EWC11257-8 / EWC11650 / EWC6427-35 / EWC6964-72), immediately to the south of the site. Structural remains (MWC6506) relating to several phases of buildings were recorded alongside two Roman roads aligned north–south. It is possible that the site lies within the rear area of these buildings, though as a Roman road (aligned east–west) is also present to the north it is possible that further buildings were present within the site boundary.
- 2.1.6 Other investigations carried out approximately 60 m SSW of the site, prior to redevelopment of the site of St Thomas' Parish Hall, at the junction of Southgate Street and St. Swithun Street (EWC10329 / EWC6858-68 / EWC 11377 / EWC 6937 / EWC6870 / EWC6874 / EWC11528-31 / EWC11376; Biddle 1975), uncovered extensive Roman remains including part of the South Gate (MWC6496).

Post-Roman and Saxon (AD 410 – 1066)

- 2.1.7 The town of *Venta Belgarum* declined rapidly with the collapse of the Roman administration in the early 5th century. The city was then re-founded by King Alfred in c.AD 871. Whilst there are indications that occupation of the town continued prior to its re-founding, it has been considered unlikely that the level of occupation was as 'urban' as it was during the Roman period.
- 2.1.8 The Saxon town (known as *Venta Caester*, and later *Wintancaester*) became an important royal and ecclesiastical centre, attested to by the presence of high-status estates within the old Roman town walls (Beaumont Jones 1997). The town defences were refortified and reorganised during the 9th century as part of the creation of a Saxon buhr (fortified town) at Winchester. The Roman walls were also rebuilt, and a new street plan established.
- 2.1.9 Excavations of foundation trenches during the construction of Villiers Court in 1977 (EWC7021 / EWC7043) uncovered a thickly accumulated (c.1 m) sequence of floor deposits and occupation debris within 7 m of the street front. Only limited recording was possible, although it was noted that the deposits probably derived from two main phases. The floor surfaces were generally of clay or mortar, often heavily burnt (especially in the later phase) and interleaved with burnt occupation soils containing abundant charcoal. A possible stone wall footing was also found, defining the edge of the earlier deposits in one section. The tops of the latest layers were recorded at approximately 0.5–0.8 m below the modern ground surface.
- 2.1.10 A very similar, and probably associated sequence of deposits was encountered during the 1980s excavations at the Lions Hall/Henly's Garage site, immediately to the south (see above). Although largely removed mechanically to expose the underlying Roman remains, these deposits were interpreted as evidence of intensive metalworking (probably iron working) over a prolonged period, probably of Late Saxon/early medieval date,

Medieval (AD 1066 – 1500)

- 2.1.11 Historical sources suggest a relatively peaceful transition to Norman rule following the Conquest. The rebellion of 1069 resulted in the removal of Stigand, Bishop of Winchester which allowed for a new ecclesiastical start. New building works began with the castle on the western side of the valley, and the Saxon royal palace to the west of the New Minster was also extended substantially by 1072. Work on the Norman cathedral began in 1079 and was dedicated in 1093. St Swithun's remains were removed from the Old Minster which was subsequently destroyed. The New Minster was also demolished, and the monks were moved to Hyde Abbey c.1130 (Beaumont James 1997).
- 2.1.12 Despite reports that Winchester was burnt, no archaeological evidence has yet been found to support the idea, though the loss of the royal palace and attacks on the castle during the civil war between Stephen and Matilda in 1141 are known to have occurred. Regardless of the economic growth within Winchester from the mid-12th century into the 14th century (Beaumont James 1997), the city slowly declined in significance as London rose to pre-eminence.
- 2.1.13 The medieval town walls occupied the same footprint as the earlier Saxon and Roman defences. The walls which defended the later medieval period were largely of 13th and 14th century construction, though likely incorporated earlier building material. A substantial ditch is known to have supplemented the walls. The medieval street plan also largely followed that established in the late-Saxon period.
- 2.1.14 Numerous investigations within the walled town have uncovered thickly deposited medieval occupation layers and structural remains of stone and timber buildings. Although the post-Roman layers were largely machined away, several medieval pits were recorded immediately to the south of the site during the Lions Hall/Henly's Garage excavations (see above).

Post-medieval to modern (AD 1500 – present)

- 2.1.15 A rapid review of historic maps indicates that, whilst John Speed's somewhat stylised plan of c.1610 (not reproduced) shows a continuous line of buildings along the western side of St Thomas Street, subsequent cartographic sources suggests development on and around the site was somewhat piecemeal. In any case, the watching brief area lies some distance from the street frontage, and probably within the back plots of any former buildings.
- 2.1.16 Given the urban context, it is unsurprising that many of the Winchester UAD entries contain references to the discovery of post-medieval finds, features or deposits. Often these records, particularly when relating to early investigations, do not contain substantial detail on post-medieval discoveries, as the emphasis tends to focus on remains from earlier periods.
- 2.1.17 Little significant post-medieval archaeology seems to have been during earlier investigations near the site. However, thickly accumulated (>1 m) post-medieval soils have been recorded to the north and east of the site (eg, EWC 11796 and EWC12154).

3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

3.1 Aims

- 3.1.1 The aims of the watching brief, as stated in the WSI (Wessex Archaeology 2019) and 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.

3.2 Objectives

3.2.1 In order to achieve the above aims, the objectives of the watching brief, also defined in the WSI (Wessex Archaeology 2019), were:

- To determine the presence or absence of archaeological features, deposits, structures, artefacts or ecofacts within the specified works area;
- To record and establish, within the constraints of the works, the extent, character, date, condition and quality of any surviving archaeological remains (a preservation by record);
- To place any identified archaeological remains within a wider historical and archaeological context in order to assess their significance; and
- To make available information about the archaeological resource on the site by preparing a report on the results of the watching brief.

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 2019) and in general compliance with the standards outlined in ClfA guidance (ClfA 2014a). The methods employed are summarised below.

4.2 Fieldwork methods

General

4.2.1 The watching brief entailed the monitoring of excavations for the placement of footings, (approximately 0.25 m wide and 0.80 m deep) within the footprint of the new conservatory, which measured 4.4 m by 2.3 m.

Recording

4.2.2 All exposed deposits were recorded using Wessex Archaeology's pro forma recording system. 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 Strategies for the recovery, processing and assessment of artefacts and environmental samples were detailed in the WSI (Wessex Archaeology 2019). In the event, however, no artefacts were recovered and no deposits suitable for environmental sampling were encountered.

4.4 Monitoring

- 4.4.1 The watching brief was monitored by the WCC Historic Environment (Archaeology) Officer.

5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS

5.1 Introduction

- 5.1.1 No archaeological remains were uncovered during the watching brief as the monitored groundworks did not extend below the level of modern deposits.

5.2 Stratigraphic sequence

- 5.2.1 On removal of the modern paving slabs (101; 0.08 m thick) that formed the existing ground surface (**Plate 1**), a 0.37 m thick layer of made ground (102) was exposed. This consisted of mixed sand and mid yellow brown silty clay with sparse rounded and sub-angular flint gravel and frequent large fragments of modern concrete rubble, brick, slate, tile and plastic.
- 5.2.2 Below 102 was another layer of made ground (103), which continued below the maximum depth (0.08 m) of the foundation trench. This consisted of a dark grey brown silty clay containing modern debris and rare medium-sized sub-angular chalk fragments (**Plates 2–4**).

6 CONCLUSIONS

6.1 Summary and discussion

- 6.1.1 Despite the potential for Roman, Saxon and medieval remains to be present, no archaeologically significant finds, features or deposits were uncovered as the monitored groundworks did not extend below modern deposits.
- 6.1.2 It is uncertain whether remains relating to those identified during the development of Villiers Court and Lions Hall extend into the watching brief area, or at what depth these or other archaeologically significant remains might be present. The corresponding UAD entries indicate that the uppermost archaeological deposits were encountered at a similar depth (roughly 0.45–0.8 m below modern ground level) to that of the trenches monitored during the watching brief. However, the modern layers of made ground may simply be more thickly accumulated within the watching brief area.
- 6.1.3 The results of the watching brief provide little indication of the extent and severity of the disturbance that would inevitably have occurred during the the construction of Villiers Court in the 1970s. Conversely, there is little reason to conclude that this would have diminished the potential for archaeologically significant remains to survive outside of the footprint of the buildings (to the full depth of their foundations) and below the modern deposits recorded during the watching brief.



7 ARCHIVE STORAGE AND CURATION

7.1 Museum

7.1.1 The archive resulting from the watching brief is currently held at the offices of Wessex Archaeology in Salisbury. Winchester City Council (via the Hampshire Cultural Trust) has agreed in principle to accept the archive on completion of the project, under the accession code WINCM: AY 697. Deposition of any finds with the museum will only be carried out with the full written agreement of the landowner to transfer title of all finds to the museum.

7.2 Preparation of the archive

7.2.1 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 the Hampshire Cultural Trust, and in general following nationally recommended guidelines (SMA 1995; ClfA 2014c; Brown 2011; ADS 2013).

7.2.2 All archive elements are marked with the site/accession code, and a full index will be prepared. The physical archive currently comprises one file of paper records and A3/A4 graphics.

7.3 Selection policy

7.3.1 Wessex Archaeology follows national guidelines on selection and retention (SMA 1993; Brown 2011, section 4). In accordance with these, and any specific guidance prepared by the relevant museum, a process of selection and retention is followed so that only those artefacts or ecofacts that are considered to have potential for future study are retained. In this instance, however, no finds or ecofacts were recovered.

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 OASIS

7.5.1 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.

8 COPYRIGHT

8.1 Archive and report copyright

8.1.1 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.

- 8.1.2 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.

8.2 Third party data copyright

- 8.2.1 This document and the project archive 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 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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Appendix 1 OASIS record

OASIS ID: wessexar1-386909

Project details

Project name	5 Villiers Court Watching Brief
Short description of the project	Wessex Archaeology was commissioned to conduct an archaeological watching brief during groundworks associated with the construction of a conservatory at 5 Villiers Court, St Thomas Street, Winchester, SO23 9HQ. The watching brief was carried out as a condition of planning permission, granted by Winchester City Council (19/01933/HOU). No archaeologically significant finds, features or deposits were uncovered during the watching brief as the monitored groundworks did not extend below modern deposits.
Project dates	Start: 03-12-2019 End: 03-12-2019
Previous/future work	Not known / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	227750 - Contracting Unit No.
Any associated project reference codes	WINCM: AY 697 - Museum accession ID
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	None
Current Land use	Other 5 - Garden
Monument type	NONE None
Significant Finds	NONE None
Investigation type	""Watching Brief""
Prompt	Planning condition

Project location

Country	England
Site location	HAMPSHIRE WINCHESTER HEADBOURNE WORTHY 5 Villers Court, Winchesterm Hampshire
Postcode	SO23 9HQ
Study area	5.06 Square metres
Site coordinates	SU 47931 29268 51.060213110007 -1.315971738268 51 03 36 N 001 18 57 W Point

Project creators



Name of Organisation	Wessex Archaeology
Project brief originator	County Windows
Project design originator	Wessex Archaeology
Project director/manager	Simon Cleggett
Project supervisor	Steven Froud

Project archives

Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive recipient	Winchester City Museum
Digital Archive ID	WINCM: AY 697
Digital Contents	"other"
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography", "Text"
Paper Archive recipient	Winchester City Museum
Paper Archive ID	WINCM: AY 697
Paper Contents	"other"
Paper Media available	"Unpublished Text"

Project bibliography 1

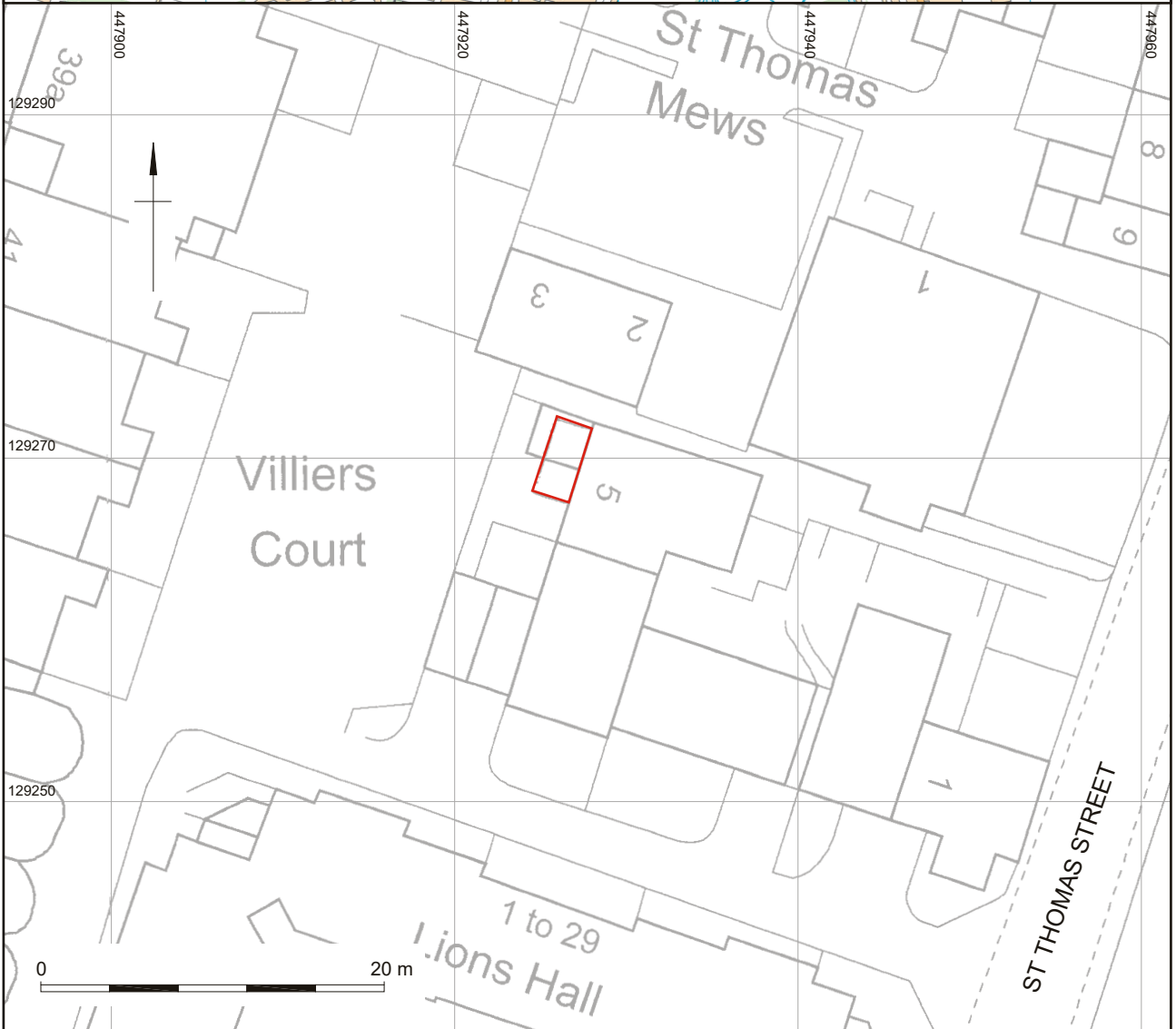
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Entered on 2 March 2020



 Watching brief area 	Coordinate system: OSGB36 (OSTN15/OSGM15) Digital data reproduced from Ordnance Survey data © Crown Copyright 2019. All rights reserved. Reference Number: 100019980. Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown Copyright and database right 2020. This material is for client report only © Wessex Archaeology. No unauthorised reproduction.		
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Site location

Figure 1



Plate 1: The monitored area photographed from the south-west



Plate 2: North-east facing section 1 along foundation trench. 1 x 1 m scale



Plate 3: North-west facing section 2 along foundation trench. 1 x 1 m scale

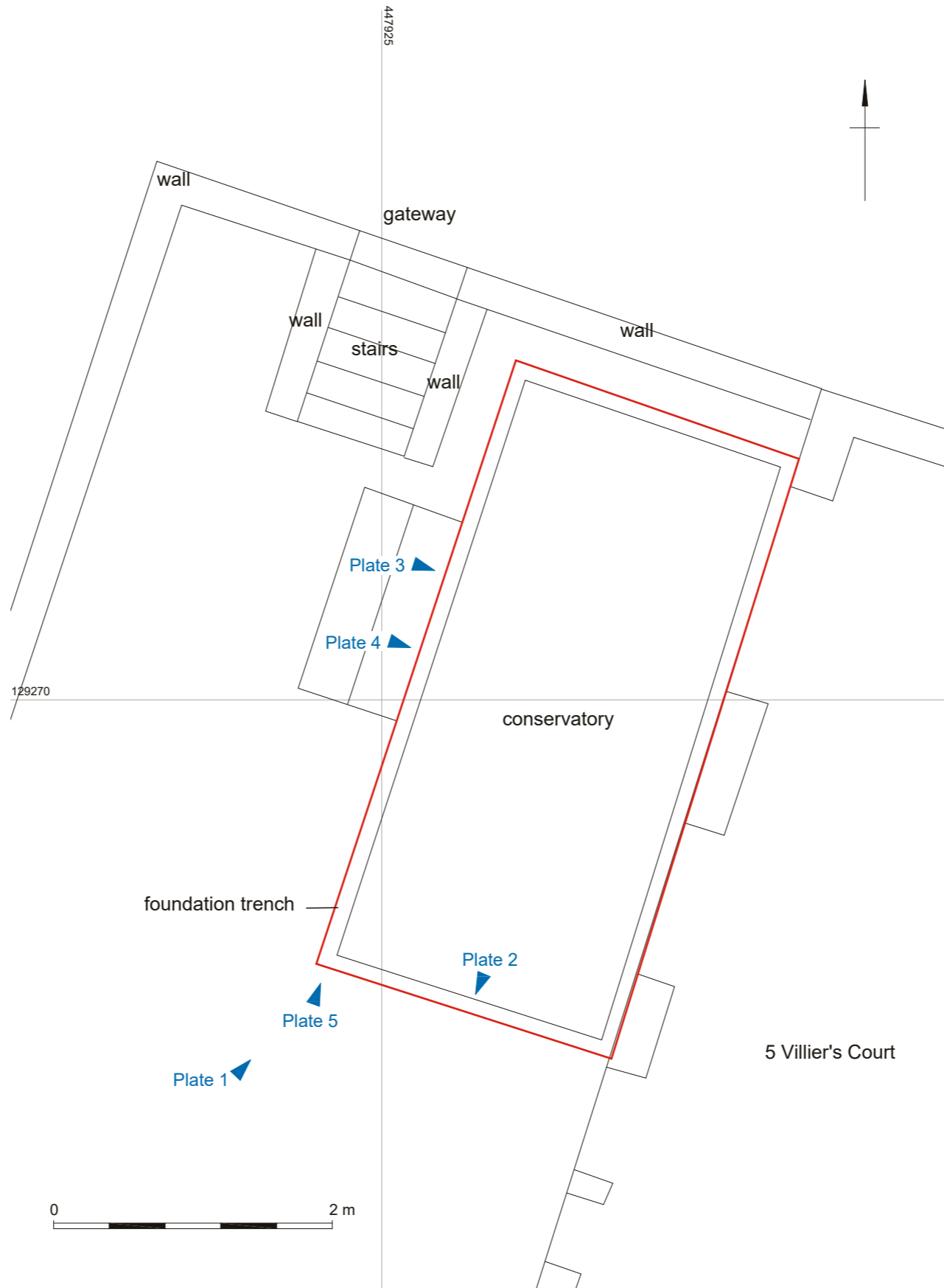


Plate 4: Retaining wall for disused brick steps beneath patio. North-west facing. 1 x 2 m scale



Plate 5: Working shot of foundation trench excavations, photographed from the south-west



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□ Watching brief area
▲ Plate direction

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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

