

## Document Information


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## Contents

Summary .....	ii
Acknowledgements.....	ii
<b>1 INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Project and planning background.....	1
1.2 Scope of the report .....	1
1.3 Location, topography and geology .....	1
<b>2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND.....</b>	<b>1</b>
2.1 Introduction.....	1
2.2 Previous investigations related to the development .....	2
2.3 Archaeological and historical context .....	2
<b>3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES.....</b>	<b>2</b>
3.1 Aims .....	2
3.2 Objectives.....	3
3.3 Introduction.....	3
3.4 Fieldwork methods.....	3
3.5 Recording .....	3
3.6 Finds and environmental strategies .....	4
3.7 Monitoring.....	4
<b>4 STRATIGRAPHIC EVIDENCE .....</b>	<b>4</b>
4.1 19th century (AD 1800–1900) .....	4
<b>5 FINDS EVIDENCE.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>6 ENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>7 CONCLUSIONS .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>8 ARCHIVE STORAGE AND CURATION.....</b>	<b>5</b>
8.1 Museum.....	5
8.2 Preparation of the archive .....	5
8.3 Selection strategy .....	5
8.4 Security copy .....	5
8.5 OASIS .....	6
<b>9 COPYRIGHT .....</b>	<b>6</b>
9.1 Archive and report copyright .....	6
9.2 Third party data copyright .....	6
<b>REFERENCES .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>APPENDICES .....</b>	<b>8</b>
Appendix 1 Context index .....	8
Appendix 2 OASIS summary .....	9

## List of Figures

- Cover** View of site from the south-west  
**Figure 1** Site location  
**Figure 2** West facing section through bank, 0.5 m scale



## Summary

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Welbeck Estates Company Ltd to undertake an archaeological watching brief relating to the proposed creation of a 'secret garden' play area, associated car parking and pedestrian enhancements at the Welbeck Estate, Welbeck, Nottinghamshire, S80 3NB, centred on NGR 454706 374161.

The watching brief monitored the machine-excavated widening of a pre-existing gap in a linear earthwork (HER no. L6874) at the main entrance to the estate. The excavation measured 9.5 m long and 1.8 m wide and cut perpendicularly through the bank, allowing examination of the deposits forming the earthwork.

Deposits relating to the construction of the earthwork (HER no. L6874) were recorded and the presence of early 19th-century land drains within the bank provides a *terminus post quem* date, correlating well with the cartographic evidence. No other archaeological remains were uncovered.

The aims and objectives of the watching brief have been met.

## Acknowledgements

Wessex Archaeology would like to thank Welbeck Estates Company Ltd for commissioning the archaeological watching brief, in particular Darren Ridout. Wessex Archaeology is also grateful for the advice of the Historic Environment Officer for Lincolnshire County Council, who monitored the project for Bassetlaw District Council.



# Secret Garden, Welbeck Estate, Welbeck, Nottinghamshire

## Archaeological Watching Brief

### 1 INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Project and planning background

- 1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Welbeck Estates Company Ltd to undertake an archaeological watching brief relating to the proposed creation of a 'secret garden' play area, associated car parking and pedestrian enhancements at the Welbeck Estate, Welbeck, Nottinghamshire, S80 3NB, centred on NGR 454706 374161 (Fig. 1).
- 1.1.2 The watching brief was carried out as a condition of planning permission, granted by Bassetlaw District Council (20/00806/FUL). Condition 8 of that planning permission relates to the archaeology.
- 1.1.3 An initial watching brief was conducted during excavation works on an earthwork bank at the main entranceway of the Welbeck Estate, however, the project was aborted soon after, and no further monitoring was required.
- 1.1.4 The watching brief was undertaken in accordance with a written scheme of investigation (WSI) which detailed the aims, methodologies and standards to be employed (Wessex Archaeology 2021). The Historic Environment Officer for Lincolnshire County Council approved the WSI, on behalf of the Local Planning Authority (LPA), prior to fieldwork commencing. The watching brief was undertaken 29 March 2021.

#### 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 watching brief was located on the western margin of the Welbeck Abbey Grade II Registered Park and Garden and comprised part of the main western entranceway.
- 1.3.2 Existing ground levels lie around 60 m OD.
- 1.3.3 The bedrock geology is - Mudstone and Sandstone of the Edlington Formation (British Geological Survey 2023). No superficial deposits are recorded.

### 2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

#### 2.1 Introduction

- 2.1.1 The archaeological and historical background below is taken from a heritage impact assessment (HIA; Wessex Archaeology 2020) with relevant entry numbers from the Nottinghamshire Historic Environment Record (HER) included.



## 2.2 Previous investigations related to the development

### *Heritage Impact Statement (2020)*

- 2.2.1 A HIA was undertaken (Wessex Archaeology 2020) as part of the planning application. The assessment identified a linear earthwork along the western entranceway and the former walled garden as non-designated heritage assets. Their significance lies in their archaeological, architectural and historic value as part of the wider Welbeck Estate and its development from the 19th century onwards.

## 2.3 Archaeological and historical context

### *19th century*

#### Linear earthwork (HER no. L6874)

- 2.3.1 Depicted first on the 1886 First Edition Ordnance Survey map, the earthwork bank is approximately 225 m in length and between 1.5 and 2 m in height. The earthwork is regular in shape and form, almost straight, with a rounded top. The earthwork partly bounds the northern side of the main entranceway into the Welbeck Estate from the west.

- 2.3.2 This area of the estate was largely developed from 1854 onwards by the 5th Duke of Portland and included a gas works. The former gas works have now been replaced by the Estate Farm Shop, Harley Gallery, Portland Collection and Harley Café. The line of the earthwork ends abruptly, in direct alignment with the eastern boundary of the opposing former gas works. This evidence, along with its form and structure, all indicate a mid-19th-century date, contemporary with the remainder of development in this area of the estate and its access route. There is, at present, no evidence to suggest the earthwork was constructed as a result of, or relates to, earlier human activity in the area.

#### Western walled garden

- 2.3.3 The former walled garden was developed in the mid-19th century as part of a large (10 ha) complex of estate kitchen gardens. The garden is depicted on the 1886 First Edition Ordnance Survey (OS) map with pathways around its edge leading to and from openings within the interlinking walled gardens. By the time of the production of the 1898 OS map the garden is shown as an orchard with an additional central east–west pathway and small structure to the west of the centre. This structure was removed by 1919, although the garden is still shown as an orchard on OS mapping of that time.

## 3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

### 3.1 Aims

- 3.1.1 The aims of the watching brief, as stated in the WSI (Wessex Archaeology 2021) and as defined in the ClfA *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;
- 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



- 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 2021), were to:

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

### **3.3 Introduction**

3.3.1 All works were undertaken in accordance with the detailed methodology set out within the WSI (Wessex Archaeology 2021) and in general compliance with the standards outlined in ClfA guidance (ClfA 2014a). The methods employed are summarised below.

### **3.4 Fieldwork methods**

#### *General*

- 3.4.1 The watching brief monitored the machine excavation of a pre-existing gap in the linear earthwork (HER no. L6874), which was widened to improve pedestrian access. The excavation measured 9.5 m long and 1.8 m wide and cut perpendicularly through the bank, allowing examination of the deposits forming the earthwork.
- 3.4.2 The watching archaeologist monitored all mechanical excavations within the specified area. Where necessary, the surfaces of uncovered archaeological deposits were cleaned by hand to aid visual definition.
- 3.4.3 Spoil from machine stripping and hand-excavated archaeological deposits was visually scanned for the purposes of finds retrieval. Artefacts were collected and bagged by context. All artefacts from excavated contexts were retained.

### **3.5 Recording**

- 3.5.1 All exposed archaeological deposits and features were recorded using Wessex Archaeology's pro forma recording system. A complete record of excavated features and deposits was made, including a section drawn to 1:20 scale and tied to the Ordnance Survey (OS) National Grid.
- 3.5.2 The location of the monitored works was tied to the OS National Grid by measuring with tapes to nearby permanent features.
- 3.5.3 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.

### **3.6 Finds and environmental strategies**

- 3.6.1 Strategies for the recovery, processing and assessment of finds and environmental samples were in line with those detailed in the WSI (Wessex Archaeology 2021). The treatment of artefacts was in general accordance with: *Standard and Guidance for the Collection, Documentation, Conservation and Research of Archaeological Materials* (ClfA 2014b), and ClfA's *Toolkit for Specialist Reporting* (ClfA 2023b; Type 1: Description).

### **3.7 Monitoring**

- 3.7.1 The Historic Environment Officer for Lincolnshire County Council monitored the watching brief on behalf of the LPA. Any variations to the WSI, if required to better address the project aims, were agreed in advance with the client and the Planning Archaeologist.

## **4 STRATIGRAPHIC EVIDENCE**

### **4.1 19th century (AD 1800–1900)**

- 4.1.1 Two deliberately dumped deposits, one of compacted mid-brown silty, stony clay with sandstone fragments (102) and the other of mid-yellow brown sand (103), formed the linear earthwork (Fig. 2). The layer appeared to be contemporaneous; the clay layer lay to the south by the road, while the sandy layer had been deposited to the north. Both deposits extended beyond the depth of the excavation, at over 1.45 m deep, and so any former ground surface that may have been sealed beneath the bank was not seen. Three fragments of 19th-century ceramic, horseshoe-shaped land drains were recovered from layer 103.
- 4.1.2 The ground surface over the earthwork comprised a 0.2 m thick mid-grey brown silty clay topsoil (101).

## **5 FINDS EVIDENCE**

- 5.1.1 Three fragments from handmade, ceramic, horseshoe-shaped land drains, weighing 3,419 g, were recovered from layer 103. These have been cleaned, quantified and scanned to assess their nature and potential data range. All information has been entered into a site-specific finds database linked to the stratigraphic information; this will form part of the permanent project archive.
- 5.1.2 The overall dimensions of the drains are approximately 13" (330–5 mm) long x 5" (130 mm) wide x 4.5" (15 mm) high. Two fragments join and both drains have finger indentations on the inner and outer surface in the same position, which suggests they were manufactured in the same location. The absence of a '*drain*' stamp could indicate that they pre-date 1826 when the tax exemption was introduced on field drains (Brunskill 1997, 23).
- 5.1.3 The assemblage is small and composed of common items, dating to the post-medieval/modern period. It has little potential to contribute further to the understanding of site activities, although the fingerprints may hold a social history interest for the estate archive. No further analysis is proposed.

## **6 ENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE**

- 6.1.1 No deposits were encountered that were deemed suitable for environmental analysis.
-



## 7 CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1.1 The aims and objectives of the watching brief have been met. Evidence of the linear earthwork (HER no. L6874) construction was recorded during the watching brief. The presence of early 19th-century land drains within the bank provides a *terminus post quem* date, correlating well with the cartographic evidence. No other archaeological remains were uncovered.

## 8 ARCHIVE STORAGE AND CURATION

### 8.1 Museum

- 8.1.1 The archive resulting from the watching brief is currently held at the offices of Wessex Archaeology in Sheffield. The site falls within the collecting area of Bassetlaw Museum.

### 8.2 Preparation of the archive

- 8.2.1 The project generated a very limited physical archive comprising paper indices and finds only. The paper indices have been digitised by scanning and the finds have been photographed. These will be retained on Wessex Archaeology's internal computer system alongside digital photographs of the site and monitoring works. Given the negative result of the project no further preparation of the project archive is required.

### 8.3 Selection strategy

- 8.3.1 It is widely accepted that not all the records and materials (artefacts and ecofacts) collected or created during the course of an archaeological project require preservation in perpetuity. These records and materials will be subject to selection in order to establish what will be retained for long-term curation, with the aim of ensuring that all elements selected to be retained are appropriate to establish the significance of the project and support future research, outreach, engagement, display and learning activities, i.e., the retained archive should fulfil the requirements of both future researchers and the receiving Museum.
- 8.3.2 The selection strategy, which details the project-specific selection process, is underpinned by national guidelines on selection and retention (Brown 2011, section 4) and generic selection policies (SMA 1993; Wessex Archaeology's internal selection policy) and follows ClfA's *Toolkit for Selecting Archaeological Archives* (2023a) It should be agreed by all stakeholders (Wessex Archaeology's internal specialists, local authority) and fully documented in the project archive.
- 8.3.3 Given the very limited results of the fieldwork, it is considered that the site conforms to the definition of a 'sterile project' (i.e., one that produces nothing of evidential value), according to the *ClfA Toolkit for Selecting Archaeological Archives* (2023a; archaeological archives from sterile projects). It is therefore recommended that only selected digital data are deposited with ADS, an approach commensurate with the scale and significance of the project. Deposition will involve the uploading of the site report via OASIS only.

### 8.4 Security copy

- 8.4.1 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.





## **8.5 OASIS**

- 8.5.1 An OASIS (online access to the index of archaeological investigations) record (<http://oasis.ac.uk>) has been initiated, with key fields completed (Appendix 2). A .pdf version of the final report will be submitted following approval by the Historic Environment Officer for Lincolnshire County Council on behalf of the LPA. 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 (ADS) ArchSearch catalogue.

## **9 COPYRIGHT**

### **9.1 Archive and report copyright**

- 9.1.1 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*.

### **9.2 Third party data copyright**

- 9.2.1 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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## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1 Context index

Context Number	Type	Category	Fill of/Filled With
<b>101</b>	<b>Layer</b>	<b>Topsoil</b>	<b>n/a</b>
Mid-grey brown, loosely compacted, silty clay with frequent rooting and regular small, sub-rounded stones (>4 cm).			
<b>102</b>	<b>Layer</b>	<b>Deliberate deposit</b>	<b>n/a</b>
Mid-reddish brown silty clay with frequent small sub-rounded stones (>6 cm) and regular sandstone fragments, redeposited natural?			
<b>103</b>	<b>Layer</b>	<b>Deliberate deposit</b>	<b>n/a</b>
Mid-yellow brown sand with frequent rooting and occasional small sub-rounded stones.			



## Appendix 2 OASIS summary

**OASIS ID (UID):** wessexar1-417145

**Project Name:** Secret Garden, Welbeck Estate, Welbeck

**Coordinates:** SK 54706 74161

**Activity type:** Watching Brief

**Site code(s):** 240251

**Project Identifier(s):** 240251

**Planning Id:** 20/00806/FUL

**Reason for Investigation:** Planning: Post determination

**Organisation Responsible for work:** Wessex Archaeology

**Project Dates:** 29-Mar-2021 - 29-Mar-2021

**HER:** Nottinghamshire HER

### Administrative Areas:

Country: England

County: Nottinghamshire

District: Bassetlaw

Parish: Holbeck

**Project Methodology:** Monitoring the machine excavation of a pre-existing gap in a linear earthwork (HER no. L6874) at the main entrance way to the estate. The excavation measured 9.5 m long and 1.8 m wide and cut perpendicularly through the bank.

**Project Results:** Deposits relating to the construction of the earthwork (HER no. L6874) were recorded, along with early 19th-century land drains.

### Reports in OASIS:

Jackson-Slater, C., (2023). *Secret Garden, Welbeck Estate, Welbeck, Nottinghamshire: Archaeological watching brief*. Sheffield: Wessex Archaeology. 240251.03.