



WA0605 Officers & Senior Ranks Garrison Mess, Aldershot, Hampshire

Archaeological Watching Brief Report





**WA 0605 OFFICERS & SENIOR RANKS GARRISON MESS,
ALDERSHOT,
HAMPSHIRE**

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

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SITE CODE	74404	ACCESSION CODE		CLIENT CODE	
PLANNING APPLICATION REF.		NGR		487428 152901	

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* I= INTERNAL DRAFT E= EXTERNAL DRAFT F= FINAL

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Figure 1 Site location plans showing area of Watching Brief
Cover General Site (WA0605) photograph viewed from the north-west

**WA0605 OFFICERS & SENIOR RANKS GARRISON MESS,
ALDERSHOT, HAMPSHIRE**

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

Summary

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by GB Solutions (the Client) on behalf of Aspire Defence Capital Works to undertake an archaeological watching brief during development on land at WA0605 Officers & Senior Ranks Garrison Mess, Aldershot, Hampshire, centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 487428 152901 (hereafter “the Site”).

The fieldwork was required in order to mitigate the impact on any archaeological remains that may have been present during development works at Aldershot Military Town and formed part of the wider proposals associated with Project Allenby/Connaught.

The new development comprised the monitoring of the strip foundation trenches for a single mess building (WA0605) and the excavation of associated service trenches. A made ground deposit was evident throughout the area and directly overlay the natural geology.

No archaeological features, deposits or finds were encountered. The variation in the depth of the made ground deposit recorded, confirms the extensive building and reorganisation known to have taken place across large areas of the camp since its construction in the mid 19th century and suggests extensive earthmoving and ground levelling has taken place within the Site itself.

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Archaeological Watching Brief Report

Acknowledgements

This watching brief was commissioned by GB Building Solutions on behalf of Aspire Defence Capital Works and Wessex Archaeology would like to thank and acknowledge Mark Gaines (the Project Manager) for his assistance and advice during the watching brief programme. Wessex Archaeology are also grateful to Colin Dallas, also of GB Building Solutions, for his assistance.

The watching brief fieldwork was conducted by Rebecca Fitzpatrick, who also compiled this report. The illustrations were prepared by Elizabeth James. The project was managed by Sue Farr on behalf of Wessex Archaeology.

**WA0605 OFFICERS & SENIOR RANKS GARRISON MESS,
ALDERSHOT, HAMPSHIRE**

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Background

- 1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by GB Building Solutions (the Client) on behalf of Aspire Defence Capital Works, to carry out an archaeological watching brief on land at WA0605 officers & Senior Ranks Garrison Mess, Aldershot, Hampshire (hereafter the Site), centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 487428 152901 (**Figure 1**).
- 1.1.2 The fieldwork was required in order to mitigate the impact on any archaeological remains that may be present during development works at Aldershot Military Town
- 1.1.3 The watching brief was required in connection with the redevelopment of the Camp under Project Allenby/Connaught. Project Allenby/Connaught is a major Ministry of Defence (MoD) project involving comprehensive improvements to the built estate at five establishments around Salisbury Plain and at Aldershot (Hampshire).
- 1.1.4 A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) was prepared (WA, 2010) setting out the methodologies and standards to be employed during the implementation of the watching brief.
- 1.1.5 The archaeological watching brief was conducted on the 9th of December 2010.

2 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Location, topography and geology

- 2.1.1 The Site is positioned within North Camp at Aldershot, to the south of the Normandy Barracks and east of Evelyn Woods Road, within the Recreation Ground.
- 2.1.2 Aldershot is situated at the northern end of the Blackwater Valley, at the confluence of the River Blackwater and River Loddon. Surrounding and underlying the Valley are Tertiary deposits with alluvial deposits along the flood plain of the River Blackwater.
- 2.1.3 Previously, the watercourse that is now known as the River Wey North Branch, formed the headwater of a much larger River Blackwater. This ancient river cut its way through the Tertiary deposits and with the erosive action of flowing water, worked and reworked the sands and gravels to eventually leave a wide floodplain. The headwaters of the ancient river were caught and diverted eastwards along the southern side of the Hogs Back to form the modern River Wey. The history of the river has meant that the

modern River Blackwater is a small river sitting in a wide flood plain, which is underlain by valuable mineral deposits.

2.2 Archaeological and historical background

2.2.1 The Aldershot Military Camp forms an important cultural heritage landscape, with a range of locally and nationally significant sites. There are three Bronze Age sites recorded, two of which are associated with higher areas of ground, which demonstrates the archaeological importance of hills and ridgelines within the area and emphasises the potential of unknown archaeological remains, particularly from the Bronze Age to be present in these locations. Following this activity, there is a lack of archaeological evidence until the post-medieval period, although it should be noted that alluvial and colluvial deposits may also have masked archaeological sites from detection.

2.2.2 Aldershot military camp was built in response to strained French relationships during the 1850's and was of strategic national importance; providing good communications and positioned between London and the South Coast. The internationally acclaimed Torchlight Tattoo was started at Government House for the Queen's entertainment in 1884. At the beginning of the twentieth century the advent of the aeroplane led to the development of the Farnborough aerodrome (north-west of the Site). During WWI and WWII the camp trained soldiers from all over the British Empire particularly Canada. After WWII the camp became a training centre for the National Service Army, and the Parachute regiment was based at the camp for over 50 years. The camp at Aldershot represents the first military camp, solely for the training of a modern professional army, to be built since the Roman invasion.

2.2.3 The military built heritage of the camp represents the most numerous and collectively significant element of cultural heritage within the camp. There are 47 military sites recorded, which range from local to national significance. Of these, 11 sites have statutory designations (nine Grade II, one Grade II* and one Grade I) and there are a further 9 military buildings which are proposed to have statutory designations (Grade II).

3 AIMS & OBJECTIVES

3.1 Archaeological Watching Brief

3.1.1 The aims and objectives of the watching brief were:

- To determine the presence or absence of archaeological remains, and should remains be found to be present to ensure their preservation by record to the highest possible standard.
- To determine or 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 the remains.
- To determine the condition and state of preservation of the remains.

- To determine the degree of complexity of the horizontal and/or vertical stratigraphy present.
- To prepare a report on the results of the watching brief.

3.2 Method

3.3 Introduction

3.3.1 The following methodology was proposed in order to meet the aims of the watching brief. All works were undertaken in accordance with the standards set out within the WSI and the requirements of the Client.

3.3.2 The fieldwork and post-excavation was carried out in accordance with the relevant guidance and standards given in the Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* (2008).

3.4 Fieldwork

3.4.1 The fieldwork comprised a single Site visit during groundworks made beneath the present ground surface for the purposes of excavation of foundation trenches, associated services and landscaping within the footprint of the new development.

3.4.2 The groundworks were carried out using a 360° tracked mechanical excavator equipped with toothless bucket. Although some of the foundation trenches had been excavated prior to the implementation of the watching brief, a number were monitored and a sufficient sample were observed to facilitate an understanding of the stratigraphic sequence within the watching brief area.

3.4.3 Recording was undertaken using Wessex Archaeology *pro-forma* record sheets. Representative soil profile sections of the foundation trenches were drawn at a scale of 1:10. A digital photographic record, which included high resolution digital images, was maintained.

3.5 Health and Safety

3.5.1 All work was carried in accordance with 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 and regulations and codes of practice in force at the time.

3.5.2 Prior to the commencement of the fieldwork a Risk Assessment was produced. Staff involved in works signed and complied with this document.

3.5.3 A Site induction was also carried by a qualified member of staff at GB Solutions.

4 RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 No archaeological features, deposits or finds were observed during the watching brief.

4.2 Stratigraphy

4.2.1 The general stratigraphy across the Site was consistent and comprised modern made ground up to 2.5m in depth at the south-west end, rising to a depth of 0.20m-0.50m in the north-east end of Site.

4.2.2 The made ground directly overlay the natural geology which consisted of yellow and blue/grey alluvial silts.

4.3 Watching Brief

4.3.1 The strip foundation trenches located towards the south-west end of the Site ranged in depth from between 2.0 to 2.5m, rising to approximately 0.70m towards the north-east end of the Site.

5 FINDS

5.1.1 No archaeological artefacts were recovered from the watching brief.

6 ENVIRONMENTAL

6.1.1 No features or deposits suitable for environmental sampling were identified.

7 DISCUSSION

7.1.1 Despite the archaeological potential, no archaeological features, deposits or finds were observed during the fieldwork.

7.1.2 The variation in the depth of the made ground deposit recorded, confirms the extensive building and reorganisation known to have taken place across large areas of the camp since its construction in the mid 19th century and suggests extensive earthmoving and ground levelling has taken place within the Site itself.

8 ARCHIVE

8.1 Preparation and Deposition

8.1.1 The project archive is currently held at the offices of Wessex Archaeology in Salisbury under the project reference 74404 and will be deposited in due course with the local museum.

8.2 Copyright

8.2.1 This report 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 we are able to provide for limited reproduction under the terms of our own copyright licences, but for which

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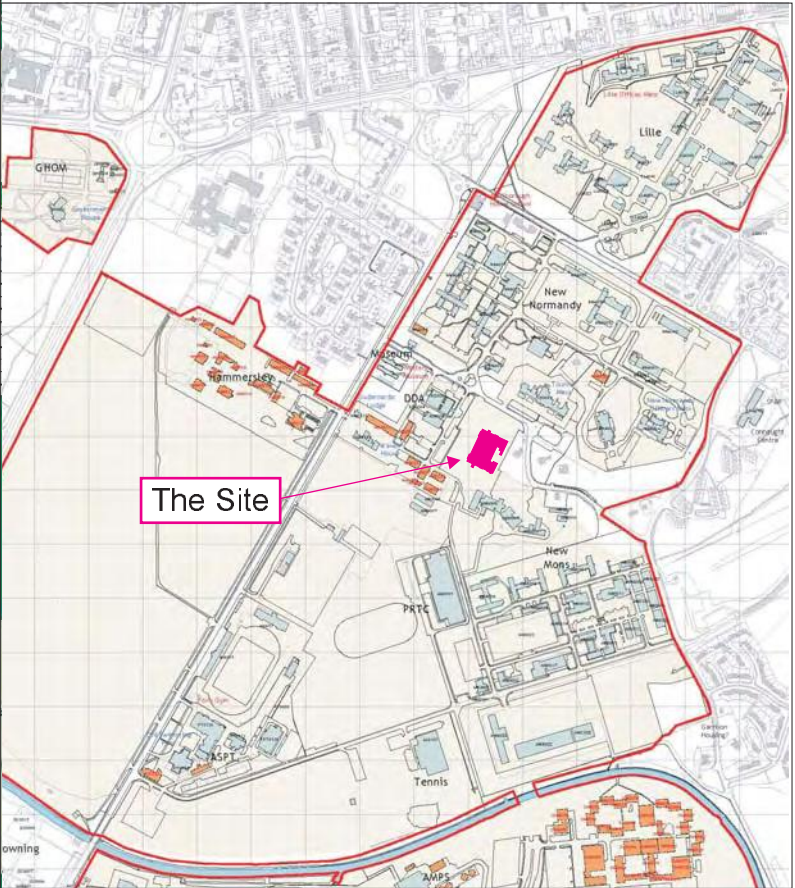
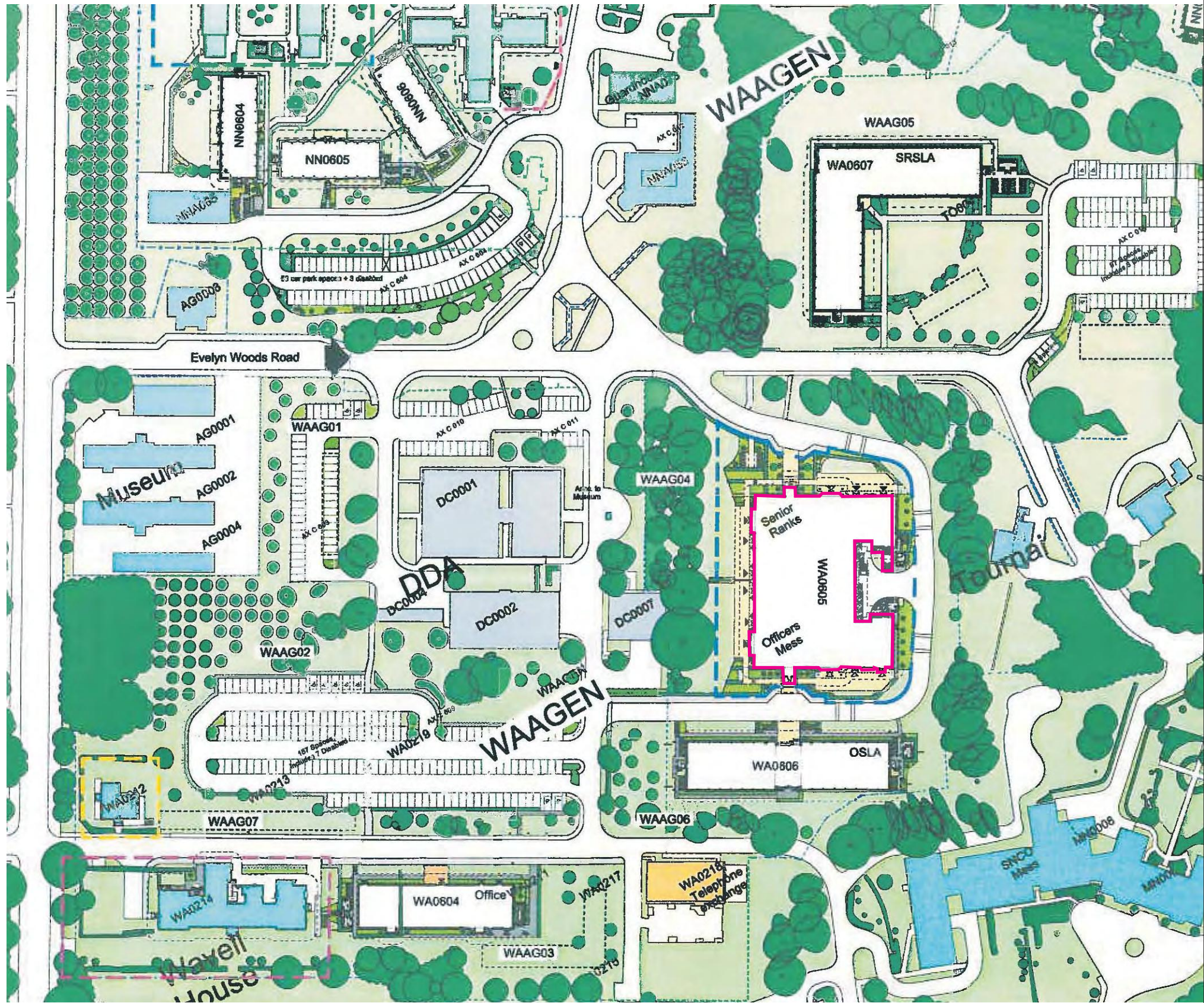
8.3 Security Copy

- 8.3.1 In line with current best practice, on completion of the project a security copy of the paper records will be prepared, in the form of microfilm. The master jackets and one diazo copy of the microfilm will be submitted to the National Monuments Record Centre (Swindon), a second diazo copy will be deposited with the paper records at the Museum, and a third diazo copy will be retained by Wessex Archaeology.

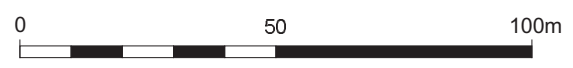
9 REFERENCES

Institute For Archaeologists, 1994 (revised 2008). Standards and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief

Wessex Archaeology 2010, *WA0605 Officers & Senior Ranks Garrison Mess, Aldershot, Hampshire: Written Scheme of Investigation for a Watching Brief*. WA Ref: 74404.03.



Area of Watching Brief



Plans supplied by Client
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Date:	13/12/10	Revision Number:	0
Scale:	see bar scale	Illustrator:	SEJ
Path:	Y:\PROJECTS\74404\Drawing Office\Report figs\WB\10_12_13\74404_Fig01.cdr		

Site location plans showing area of Watching Brief

Figure 1



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