



**STONEHENGE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT**

**A344 Works,  
Stonehenge,  
Wiltshire**

**Archaeological Watching Brief Report**

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**March 2011**

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## QUALITY ASSURANCE

SITE CODE	<b>76860</b>	ACCESSION CODE		CLIENT CODE	
PLANNING APPLICATION REF.		NGR		<b>409897, 141365</b>	

VERSION	STATUS*	PREPARED BY	APPROVED BY	APPROVER'S SIGNATURE	DATE	FILE
01	I	RF	SF		30/03/11	X:\PROJECTS\WESSEX\PROJECTS\76860\REPORT

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

**STONEHENGE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT**

**A344 WORKS,  
STONEHENGE,  
WILTSHIRE**

**Archaeological Watching Brief Report**

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- Figure 1** Site and trial pit location plan  
**Figure 2** Site and trial pit location plan  
**Plate 1** East facing section of Trial Pit 2  
**Cover** Excavation of Trial Pit 12 viewed from the north-west

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**STONEHENGE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT****A344 WORKS,  
STONEHENGE,  
WILTSHIRE****Archaeological Watching Brief report****Summary**

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Chris Blandford Associates, on behalf of English Heritage (the Client) to undertake an archaeological watching brief during Site Investigations at Stonehenge and Airman's Corner, Winterbourne Stoke, Wiltshire, located between National Grid Reference (NGR) 409657, 142927 and 412552, 142142.

The site is located within the Stonehenge part of the Avebury and Stonehenge World Heritage Site which comprises a prehistoric monumental and funeral landscape within a 5km radius of Stonehenge. The site was therefore considered to have a high archaeological potential especially within the Stonehenge Visitors car park and at Airman's Corner.

The watching brief was requested as part of the initial mitigation investigations associated with the Stonehenge Environmental Improvements Project (SEIP) which will involve decommissioning and removal of the existing visitor centre, car park and A344 between Byway 12 and Stonehenge Bottom.

The watching brief comprised the hand excavation of twelve small trial pits. Two trial pits were located in the Stonehenge Visitor car park, five trial pits were positioned on the A344, two located on the A360 at Airman's corner and three situated on the B3086.

No archaeological features or deposits were evident within the trial pits. It should be noted that the shallow depth and small sample size of the trial pits were all within made ground deposits and the survival of potential archaeological features below the present road in the areas observed cannot be discounted.

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**STONEHENGE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT****A344 WORKS,  
STONEHENGE,  
WILTSHIRE****Archaeological Watching Brief Report****Acknowledgements**

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Chris Blandford Associates on behalf of English Heritage (the Client) and would like to thank Martin Harvey and Dominic Watkins in this regard. The advice and assistance of Marika Gates of Halcrow (Geologist) is also gratefully acknowledged.

The archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Rebecca Fitzpatrick. This report was compiled by Rebecca Fitzpatrick. Illustrations were prepared by Linda Coleman. The project was managed by Sue Farr on behalf of Wessex Archaeology

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**STONEHENGE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT****A344 WORKS,  
STONEHENGE,  
WILTSHIRE****Archaeological Watching Brief Report****1 INTRODUCTION****1.1 Project Background**

1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Chris Blandford Associates, on behalf of English Heritage (the Client), to undertake an archaeological watching brief during Site Investigation works at Stonehenge car park and Airman's Corner, Winterbourne Stoke, Wiltshire, located between National Grid Reference (NGR) 409657, 142927 and 412552, 142142 hereafter 'the Site' (**Figure 1 & 2**).

1.1.2 The Stonehenge Environmental Improvements Project (SEIP) has been developed by English Heritage to deliver an improved landscape setting for Stonehenge. One element of the SEIP proposes the decommissioning and removal of the existing visitor facilities, car park and the A344 between Byway 12 and Stonehenge Bottom.

1.1.3 The proposed Site Investigation works at Stonehenge and Airman's Corner comprised the hand excavation of six trial pits at Airman's Corner and a further six trial pits at Stonehenge. Following the breaking out of each trial pit by disc cutter or pneumatic air hammer, an archaeological watching brief was maintained during the hand excavation of each trial pit.

1.1.4 A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) (WA, February 2011) set out the techniques and methodologies of the proposed monitoring work, and was prepared for comment by Wiltshire Council and English Heritage's Stonehenge Curatorial Unit (SCU) ('the monitors').

1.1.5 The watching brief fieldwork was conducted on the 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2011.

1.1.6 This document sets out the results of the watching brief monitoring programme.

**1.2 Site, Location, Topography and geology**

1.2.1 The Site consists of two areas within or immediately adjacent to, the Stonehenge World Heritage Site.

1.2.2 Trial pits 9 to 14 were positioned within the footprint of the existing Stonehenge visitors' car park and extended eastwards along the A344 to the junction of the A303 at Stonehenge Bottom. Further west, trial pits proposed at Airman's Corner were located within the existing 'live' carriageways of the A360, A344 and B3086.

1.2.3 The height of the areas varies between c. 90m aOD (above Ordnance Datum) and 120m aOD.

1.2.4 The underlying geology comprised uncapped Cretaceous Middle Chalk.

## **2 PROPOSED IMPACTS**

### **2.1 A344 works**

2.1.1 As part of the proposals, the A344 between Airman's Corner and Byway 12 were closed to motorised traffic. The surface of the A344 road between Byway 12 and its existing junction with the A303 at Stonehenge Bottom will be returned to grass.

2.1.2 The decommissioning and removal of the A344 road between Byway 12 and Stonehenge Bottom would include closure of the A344/A303(T) junction, following which the A303 carriageway will be reconfigured by the Highways Agency.

### **2.2 Decommissioning works to the existing facilities at the Stones.**

2.2.1 The existing parking areas and temporary buildings comprising the existing visitor facilities at the Stones will be removed, and the landscape re-contoured and restored to grass.

2.2.2 The existing permanent concrete and temporary portacabin buildings would be replaced with a smaller scale operational facility or 'hub' within the existing developed footprint and almost entirely below ground level. The existing water and waste water services would be maintained at the hub to serve the toilet areas and staff amenities, thus minimising additional below ground works.

## **3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND**

### **3.1 Introduction**

3.1.1 The archaeological potential of each area has been considered in a desk-based assessment produced by English Heritage (Leary, 2008) and is detailed in Appendix A5.1 of the ES and the Historical Environment Appraisal (WA, 2009a) and is not repeated here. A summary of specific elements relating to this proposal is provided below.

### **3.2 Designated Sites**

3.2.1 The Stonehenge, Avebury and Associated Sites were inscribed onto the World Heritage List in 1986. The nomination focused on the two megalithic monuments of Stonehenge and Avebury. However, it also included a number of associated sites; those close to Stonehenge include: Robin Hood's Ball; fifteen Neolithic long barrows within a 5km radius of Stonehenge; the Cursus; Woodhenge; Durrington Walls and numerous Bronze Age round barrows surrounding Stonehenge.

### **3.3 Stonehenge Visitor Car Park**

3.3.1 Although development of the existing car park and facilities is thought to have removed all remains, the potential for Mesolithic, Neolithic and Bronze Age activity is considered high.

3.3.2 The sockets for four large Mesolithic posts (c. 8,000 BC) were found within the existing Stonehenge car park. Such evidence is exceptionally rare in Britain, and this line of postholes has been described as the first monument in England (Darvill, 2006). Environmental analysis of the contents of the post pits show the surrounding area to have been characterised by pine woodland.

3.3.3 Stake holes of possible Iron Age date were located during works at the existing Stonehenge car park and may indicate further activity of some kind close to the monument during this period

### **3.4 Airman's Corner**

3.4.1 The evidence for Bronze Age round barrows within the vicinity of Airman's Corner suggest that the potential to recover remains of this period is high. Field systems in the area suggest the potential to recover associated remains is high.

3.4.2 Archaeological trial trenching to the south of the A344 on the proposed new visitor centre site has been undertaken (WA 2009b). Fifty-two trenches each 30m long were excavated, representing a 5% sample by area. Apart from a single undated possible posthole containing fragments of burnt flint, all features recorded were either modern (plough scars) or natural tree throw holes.

## **4 AIMS**

### **4.1 General**

4.1.1 The aims of the archaeological watching brief were to:

- Clarify the presence/absence and extent of any buried archaeological remains within the Site that may be threatened by the SI work.
- Identify, within the constraints of the watching brief area, the date, character, condition and depth of any surviving remains within the Site.
- Assess the degree of existing impacts to sub-surface horizons and to document the extent of archaeological survival of buried deposits.
- Produce a report which will present the results of the watching brief in sufficient detail to allow an informed decision to be made concerning the Site's archaeological potential.

## **5 WATCHING BRIEF METHODOLOGY**

### **5.1 Introduction**

5.1.1 The following methodology was completed in order to meet the aims of the archaeological watching brief. All works were undertaken in accordance with the WSI (WA, 2011) and requirements of the Client, the Assistant County Archaeologist at Wiltshire Council and English Heritage's SCU. All Site attendance and recording was conducted in compliance with the standards outlined in the Institute for Archaeologists' Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief (as amended 2008).



## 5.2 Fieldwork

- 5.2.1 A total of twelve hand excavated trial pits were excavated as indicated on **Figure 1 & 2**. Each test pit was broken out by disc cutter or pneumatic air-hammer and hand excavation of the test pit undertaken by Ringway Infrastructure Services Ltd, supervised by Halcrow Group Limited. Excavations ceased at the top of the natural geology.
- 5.2.2 Each trial pit was recorded using the appropriate Wessex archaeology's *pro forma* recording system.
- 5.2.3 The watching brief was maintained throughout the trial pit investigations.
- 5.2.4 A photographic record was maintained during the watching brief using digital cameras equipped with an image sensor of not less than 10 megapixels. Digital images will be subject to managed quality control and curation processes which will embed appropriate metadata within the image and ensure long term accessibility of the image set.
- 5.2.5 Arrangements, if required, were put in place with the Client in order for the Assistant County Archaeologist, Wiltshire Council and English Heritage's SCU to monitor progress of the watching brief in site visits.

## 5.3 Health and Safety

- 5.3.1 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.
- 5.3.2 Prior to the commencement of the fieldwork a Risk Assessment was produced. Staff involved in works signed and complied with this document.

## 6 WATCHING BRIEF RESULTS

### 6.1 Introduction

- 6.1.1 No archaeological features were present and no artefactual or paleo-environmental deposits were collected. Trial pit summaries are contained in **Appendix 1**.

### 6.2 Trial Pit Observations

- 6.2.1 A total of twelve trial pits located within both a closed and live carriageway environment were observed. The trial pits measured between 0.50m and 0.87m in length, 0.50m and 0.67m in width and 0.19m and 0.61m in depth.
- 6.2.2 All the trial pits displayed a similar stratigraphic sequence throughout the Site (**Plate 1**). This consisted of modern tarmac to a depth between 0.09m and 0.41m overlying sub-tarmac road make-up/ levelling to a depth of between 0.16m and 0.55m sealing, and in a number of instances severely truncating, the natural geology comprising Cretaceous Middle Chalk.
- 6.2.3 The natural geology was not reached in three trial pits. Within Trial Pits 1 and 3 this was a result of the required depths of excavation as prescribed by

the designated geologist and mechanical impracticalities within Trial Pit 8 as a result of constricted space precluded full excavation.

6.2.4 No archaeology was observed within the limits of the trial pits.

## **7 DISCUSSION**

7.1.1 No archaeological features or deposits were evident within the trial pits. The results of the trial pit watching brief indicate that the road construction has effectively sealed and/or truncated the natural geology.

7.1.2 It should be noted that the shallow depth and small sample size of the trial pits were all within made ground deposits. Moreover, although the natural geology was reached within 9 of the 12 excavated trial pits, the base of the trial pit was not fully exposed and the survival of potential archaeological features below the present road surface in the areas observed cannot be fully discounted.

7.1.3 The three areas, Stonehenge Visitors car park, Byway 12 to Stonehenge Bottom and Airman's Corner, allocated for archaeological observations did not identify archaeological features and/or deposits.

7.1.4 Trial pits 12 and 13 were positioned approximately 50m either side of the Avenue. Within the roadside verge, the base of the easternmost Avenue ditch is recorded at approximately 99m aOD (Pitts, 1982) and the natural chalk within TP13 was recorded at 99.11m aOD, approximately 0.30m below the road surface, suggesting the ditches flanking the Avenue may still survive beneath the present road surface, albeit in a truncated form.

## **8 ARCHIVE**

### **8.1 Preparation and Deposition**

8.1.1 The complete project archive was prepared in accordance with Wessex Archaeology's Guidelines for Archive Preparation and in accordance with *Guidelines for the preparation of excavation archives for long-term storage (UKIC 1990)*. On completion of the project the archive will be deposited with the Salisbury and South Wiltshire Museum.

8.1.2 The resulting archive will be microfiched to the standards accepted by the National Monuments Record (NMR). One copy will be deposited with the Wiltshire Site and Monuments Records (SMR); a further copy will be deposited with the NMR.

**9 REFERENCES**

- Darvill, T. 2006 Stonehenge: the Biography of a Landscape, 62-4
- Leary, J. 2008 Stonehenge Environmental Improvements Project: An Archaeological desk-based Assessment of Areas V, W, X, Y and Z. English Heritage, June 2008
- Pitts, M.J. 1982 On the road to Stonehenge: report on the investigations beside the A344 in 1968, 1979 and 1980 in *Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society* Volume 48
- Wessex Archaeology January 2009a *Stonehenge Environmental Improvements Project: Historic Environment Assessment* WA Report no. 70110.01
- Wessex Archaeology January 2009b *Land at Airman's Corner, Wiltshire: Archaeological Evaluation Report* WA Report no. 71651.02
- Wessex Archaeology February 2011 *Stonehenge Environmental Improvements Project A344 Works, Wiltshire: Written Scheme of Investigation: Method Statement for an Archaeological Watching Brief* WA Report no. 76860.01

**APPENDIX 1: TRIAL PIT TABLES**

Test Pit 1		Max Depth: 0.61m	Dimensions: 0.60m <sup>2</sup>
Context	Type	Description	Depth (m) (BGL)
101	Layer	Tarmac I	0.00-0.10
102	Layer	Tarmac II	0.10-0.23
103	Layer	Tarmac III	0.23-0.41
104	Layer	Hogging: road make-up/ levelling.	0.41-0.61+
Notes: Natural Geology not reached/ penetrated.			

Test Pit 2		Max Depth: 0.50m	Length: 0.58m	Width: 0.55m
Context	Type	Description	Depth (m) (BGL)	
201	Layer	Tarmac I	0.00-0.10	
202	Layer	Tarmac II	0.10-0.30	
203	Layer	Tarmac III	0.30-0.38	
204	Layer	Hogging: road makeup/ levelling comprised stone aggregate.	0.38-0.50	
205	Layer	Natural Geology: soliflucted chalk.	0.50+	

Test Pit 3		Max Depth: 0.23m	Length: 0.60m	Width: 0.57m
Context	Type	Description	Depth (m) (BGL)	
301	Layer	Tarmac	0.00-0.10	
302	Layer	Hogging: road make-up/ levelling.	0.10-0.16	
303	Layer	Natural Geology: chalk severely truncated by road construction.	0.16-0.23+	
Notes: on further investigation of TPs 2, 1, 5 + 8 the 'natural geology' as recorded within this TP may not be. Sub tarmac layers were very compacted and although appeared to have a high chalk content it is doubtful that the natural occurred at such a high level (as recorded in this TP) when compared to the presence of natural occurring at lower levels within those in the vicinity.				

Test Pit 4		Max Depth: 0.60m	Length: 0.66m	Width: 0.62m
Context	Type	Description	Depth (m) (BGL)	
401	Layer	Tarmac I	0.00-0.09	
402	Layer	Tarmac II	0.09-0.28	
403	Layer	Hogging: road make-up/ levelling comprised stone (limestone ?) aggregate.	0.28-0.55	
404	Layer	Natural Geology: soliflucted chalk.	0.55-0.60+	

Test Pit 5		Max Depth: 0.43m	Length: 0.60m	Width: 0.50m
Context	Type	Description	Depth (m) (BGL)	
501	Layer	Tarmac I	0.00-0.10	
502	Layer	Tarmac II	0.10-0.20	
503	Layer	Hogging: road make-up/ levelling. Stone aggregate (chert?) and flint. Sandy gravel with slight clay content. Evident towards lower interface.	0.20-0.43+	
504	Layer	Natural Geology: soliflucted chalk and flint.	0.43+	

Test Pit 8		Max Depth: 0.53m	Dimensions: 0.50m <sup>2</sup>
Context	Type	Description	Depth (m) (BGL)
801	Layer	Tarmac	0.00-0.20
802	Layer	Hogging: sub tarmac road make-up/ levelling. Comprised large limestone fragments.	0.20-0.53+
Notes: Natural Geology not reached/ penetrated.			

Test Pit 9		Max Depth: 0.22m	Length: 0.58m	Width: 0.50m
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Context	Type	Description	Depth (m) (BGL)
901	Layer	Tarmac	0.00-0.10
902	Layer	Hogging: road make-up/ levelling.	0.10-0.22
903	Layer	Natural Geology: chalk.	0.22+

Test Pit 10		Max Depth: 0.34m	Length: 0.60m	Width: 0.55m
Context	Type	Description	Depth (m) (BGL)	
1001	Layer	Tarmac	0.00-0.10	
1002	Layer	Hogging: road make-up/ levelling.	0.10-0.34	
1003	Layer	Natural Geology: chalk and flint.	0.34+	

Test Pit 11		Max Depth:0.19 m	Length: 0.55m	Width: 0.52m
Context	Type	Description	Depth (m) (BGL)	
1101	Layer	Tarmac	0.00-0.10	
1102	Layer	Hogging: sub tarmac road make-up/ levelling comprised stone aggregate (limestone ?).	0.10-0.14	
1103	Layer	Natural Geology: Chalk and flint.	0.14-0.19+	

Test Pit 12		Max Depth:0.30 m	Length: 0.70m	Width: 0.66m
Context	Type	Description	Depth (m) (BGL)	
1201	Layer	Tarmac	0.00-0.10	
1202	Layer	Hogging: road make-up levelling.	0.10-0.30	
1203	Layer	Natural Geology: Chalk and flint.	0.30+	

Test Pit 13		Max Depth:0.30 m	Length: 0.70m	Width: 0.67m
Context	Type	Description	Depth (m) (BGL)	
1301	Layer	Tarmac	0.00-0.10	
1302	Layer	Hogging: road make-up/ levelling.	0.10-0.24	
1303	Layer	Natural Geology: Chalk and flint.	0.24-0.30+	

Test Pit 14		Max Depth:0.037 m	Length: 0.87m	Width: 0.63m
Context	Type	Description	Depth (m) (BGL)	
1401	Layer	Tarmac	0.00-0.10	
1402	Layer	Hogging: yellow gravels in a sand matrix. Not penetrated. Located NE side of Test Pit 14.	0.10+	
1403	Layer	Levelling layer: clinker rubble/ industrial waste.	0.10-0.30	
1404	Layer	Levelling layer: more fine clinker and crushed brick waste. Industrial by product used for road make-up/ levelling.	0.30-0.37	
1405	Layer	Natural Geology: chalk – severely truncated by road construction.	0.37+	

BGL= Below Ground Level

**APPENDIX 2: OASIS RECORD FORM**
**OASIS ID: wessexar1-98456**
**Project details**

Project name SEIP

Short description of the project Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Chris Blandford Associates, on behalf of English Heritage (the Client) to undertake an archaeological watching brief during Site Investigations at Stonehenge and Airman's Corner, Winterbourne Stoke, Wiltshire, located between National Grid Reference (NGR) 409657, 142927 and 412552, 142142. The site is located within the Stonehenge part of the Avebury and Stonehenge World Heritage Site which comprises a prehistoric monumental and funeral landscape within a 5km radius of Stonehenge. The site was therefore considered to have a high archaeological potential especially within the Stonehenge Visitors car park and at Airman's Corner. The watching brief was requested as part of the initial mitigation investigations associated with the Stonehenge Environmental Improvements Project (SEIP) which will involve decommissioning and removal of the existing visitor centre, car park and A344 between Byway 12 and Stonehenge Bottom. The watching brief comprised the hand excavation of twelve small trial pits. Two trial pits were located in the Stonehenge Visitor car park, five trial pits were positioned on the A344, two located on the A360 at Airman's corner and three situated on the B3086. No archaeological features or deposits were evident within the trial pits. It should be noted that the shallow depth and small sample size of the trial pits were all within made ground deposits and the survival of potential archaeological features below the present road in the areas observed cannot be discounted.

Project dates Start: 01-02-2011 End: 15-04-2011

Previous/future work No / No

Any associated project reference codes 76860.03 - Contracting Unit No.

Type of project Recording project

Site status World Heritage Site

Current Land use Other 11 - Thoroughfare

Monument type NONE None

Significant Finds      NONE None

Investigation type      'Watching Brief'

### Project location

Country                  England

Site location            WILTSHIRE SALISBURY WINTERBOURNE STOKE A344 Works

Postcode                SP4 7DE

Height OD / Depth      Min: 99.41m Max: 101.15m

### Project creators

Name                    of ENGLISH HERITAGE  
Organisation

Project                  brief English Heritage  
originator

Project                  design Wessex Archaeology  
originator

Project                    Sue Farr  
director/manager

Project supervisor      Rebecca Fitzpatrick

Type                    of Consultant  
sponsor/funding  
body

Name                    of Chris Blandford Associates  
sponsor/funding  
body

### Project archives

Physical      Archive No  
Exists?

Digital recipient      Archive    Salisbury and South Wiltshire Museum

Digital Contents      'none'

Digital available      Media    'Spreadsheets','Text'

Paper recipient      Archive    Salisbury and South Wilts Museum

Paper Contents      'other'

Paper available      Media    'Context sheet','Drawing','Map','Notebook - Excavation',' Research','  
General Notes','Photograph','Plan','Report','Section'

### Project bibliography 1

Publication type      Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)

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Entered on              5 April 2011



**SEIP**

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Previous/future work No / No

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Type of project Recording project

Site status World Heritage Site

Current Land use Other 11 - Thoroughfare

Monument type NONE None

Significant Finds NONE None

Investigation type 'Watching Brief'

### Project location

Country England

Site location WILTSHIRE SALISBURY WINTERBOURNE STOKE A344 Works

Postcode SP4 7DE

Height OD / Depth Min: 99.41m Max: 101.15m

### Project creators

Name of Organisation ENGLISH HERITAGE

Project brief originator English Heritage

Project design originator Wessex Archaeology

Project director/manager Sue Farr

Project supervisor Rebecca Fitzpatrick

Type of sponsor/funding body Consultant

Name of sponsor/funding body Chris Blandford Associates

### Project archives

Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive recipient	Salisbury and South Wiltshire Museum
Digital Contents	'none'
Digital Media available	'Spreadsheets','Text'
Paper Archive recipient	Salisbury and South Wilts Museum
Paper Contents	'other'
Paper Media available	'Context sheet','Drawing','Map','Notebook - Excavation',' Research',' General Notes','Photograph','Plan','Report','Section'

### **Project bibliography 1**

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