

A new perimeter fence around the Wellington Monument, Wellington, Somerset

NGR ST1373717234

Results of an archaeological watching brief

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archaeology

A NEW PERIMETER FENCE AROUND THE WELLINGTON MONUMENT, WELLINGTON, SOMERSET (ST1373717234)

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SUMMARY

An archaeological watching brief during the hand-excavation of 16 post-pits for a new perimeter fence around the Wellington Monument, Blackdown Hills, Somerset (ST1373717234), was undertaken by AC archaeology during June 2010. The post-pits were a maximum of 0.6m x 0.3m in plan and 0.8m deep. A fairly consistent layer sequence of topsoil above natural subsoil was present, with no archaeological features or deposits present and no finds recovered.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 An archaeological watching brief during the excavation of post pits for a new perimeter fence around the Wellington Monument, Wellington, Somerset (ST1373717234), was undertaken by AC archaeology during June 2010. The work was commissioned by The National Trust.
- 1.2 The monument is situated on a high ridge within the Blackdown Hills at around 270m OD. There is managed grass immediately surrounding the monument, with woodland beyond. The underlying solid geology comprises Upper Greensand.
- 1.3 The monument itself is a Grade II* listed structure, 53m high and construction of it began in 1817 to mark the victory of the Duke of Wellington at the Battle of Waterloo. It was eventually completed shortly after Wellington's death in 1852, after delays caused by lack of money. The monument was transferred into the ownership of The National Trust in 1934. The monument now needs significant funding to repair it and needs a security fence around it while funding is sourced.
- 1.4 There is a general potential in this area for buried archaeological remains dating to the prehistoric period.

2. AIMS

- 2.1 The aim of the watching brief was to preserve by record any archaeological features or deposits exposed during groundworks associated with the erection of the perimeter fence.

3. METHODOLOGY

- 3.1 The watching brief was undertaken in accordance with a brief prepared by the National Trust Archaeologist (Papworth 2010). The erection of the new fence entailed the hand-excavation of 16 post pits (Plate 1), with their positions shown on Fig. 1. The dimension of the pits varied, although the corner post pits were largest at around 0.6m x 0.3m, with the smallest at 0.25 x 0.25m. The depth of pits also varied between c. 0.8m at the corners, to as little as 0.2m elsewhere.
- 3.2 The site was recorded in accordance with the AC archaeology pro-forma recording system, comprising written, graphic and photographic records, and with reference to AC archaeology's *General Site Recording Manual, Version 1*.

4. RESULTS

- 4.1 The layer sequence recorded in each of the post pits was generally consistent and is shown on Plate 1 and tabulated in Table 1 below. The only real variations to this were in pits 3,4,7,8 and 10 where modern gravels for access paths were present. There was no evidence for archaeological features or deposits in any post pit and no finds were recovered.

Context	Depth below ground surface	Description	Interpretation
100	0.0 – 0.20/0.30	Light to mid brown sandy silt, with occasional small stones	Modern topsoil
102	0.20/0.30m+	Orange-brown clay	Natural subsoil

Table 1: The general layer sequence within the majority of post pits

5. COMMENT

- 5.1 The excavation of the post pits was limited in extent and no evidence for archaeological activity was identified.

6. ARCHIVE AND OASIS

- 6.1 The paper and digital archive are currently held at the offices of AC archaeology Ltd, at 4 Halthaies Workshops, Bradninch, near Exeter, Devon, EX5 4LQ. The OASIS (Online AccesS to the Index of Archaeological InvestigationS) number for this project is 89998.

7. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

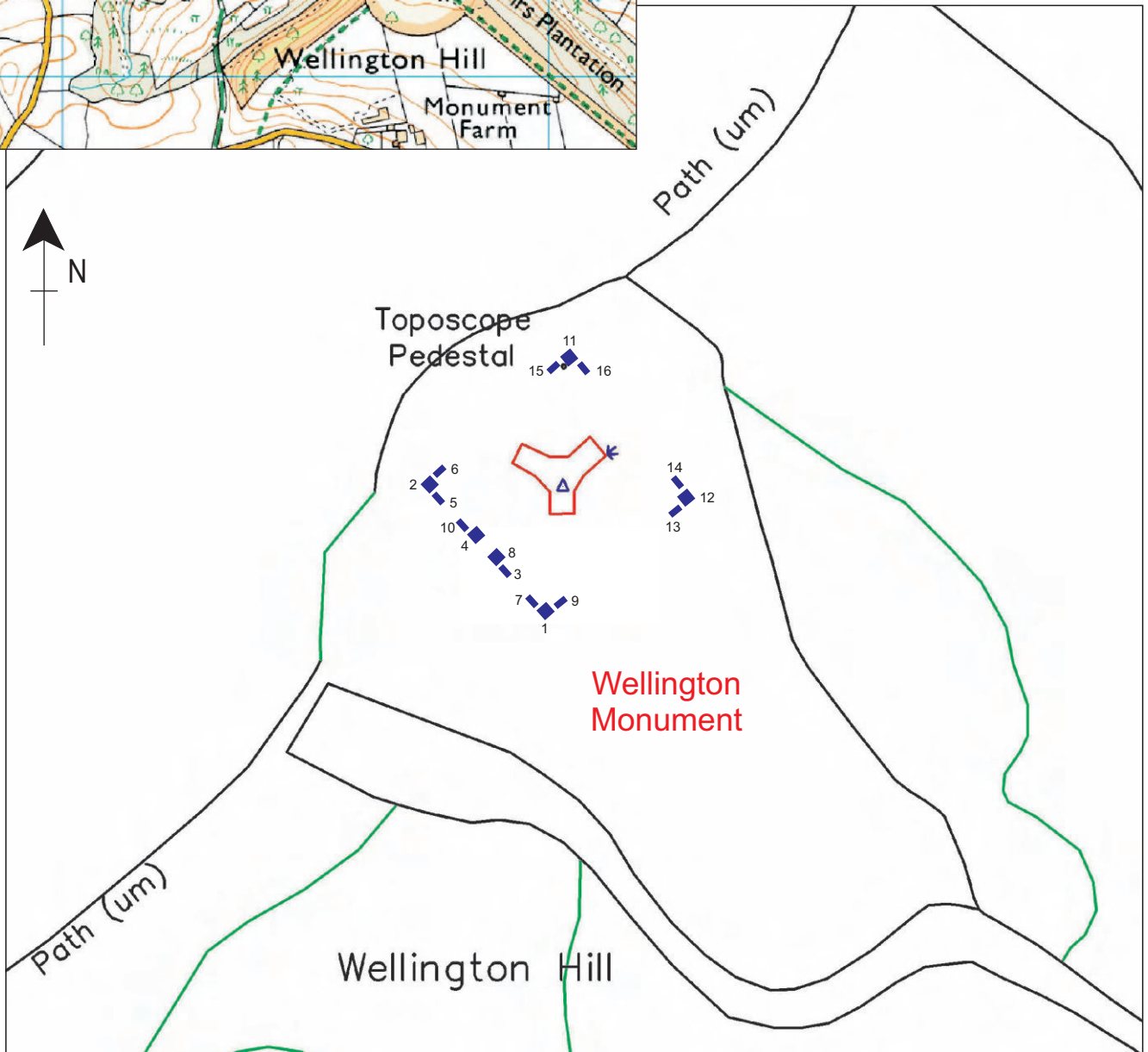
The watching brief was commissioned on behalf of The National Trust by Martin Papworth. The site work was carried out by Marc Cox and the illustrations for this report were prepared by Cain Hegarty.

8. REFERENCES

Papworth, M., 2010, *Archaeological Watching Brief during the creation of new security perimeter fence around Wellington Monument, Blackdown Hills*. Unpublished National Trust document.



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PROJECT

Wellington Monument, Blackdown Hills

TITLE

Fig. 1 Location of site and post pits for perimeter fence





Plate 1: Excavation method, view to northwest



Plate 2: Detail of post pit 11.
View to the north (Scale 0.5m)

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