



Rockstone Court Rockstone Lane, Southampton

Archaeological Watching Brief



Planning Ref: 19/00971/FUL

Site code: SOU 1912

Ref: 225170.03

September 2021



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Museum accession code TBC
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Summary

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by The Hyde Group, to undertake an archaeological watching brief during groundworks associated with the demolition and reinstatement of a retaining wall at Rockstone Court, Rockstone Lane, Southampton, SO14 6HZ centred on NGR 442371 112963.

The ground surface within the development area lies c. 2m higher than the neighbouring ground level to the north and east and which is supported by a retaining wall. The development was proposed to comprise of the removal of material behind the existing retaining wall, demolition of the wall, and the installation of a new retaining wall, and reinstatement of material back to the original level. However, following excavation of the material behind the retaining wall under archaeological supervision, it was determined that the existing wall was structurally sound and could be repaired by refacing and repointing its external faces, and therefore negating the need for its removal.

The archaeological watching brief monitored the excavation of the material behind the retaining wall, which revealed wholly modern made ground deposits most likely associated with the original construction of the existing wall and therefore no archaeological features or material was observed. With the revision of the proposed works and presence of wholly modern deposits the watching brief was curtailed following consultation with the Planning Archaeologist at Southampton City Council.

Acknowledgements

Wessex Archaeology would like to thank The Hyde Group, for commissioning the archaeological watching brief, in particular Stewart Glue. Wessex Archaeology is also grateful for the advice of Planning Archaeologist at Southampton City Council, who monitored the project for Southampton City Council, and to Construction and Building Ltd for their cooperation and help on site.



Rockstone Court, Rockstone Lane, Southampton, SO14 6HZ - Archaeological watching brief

Archaeological Watching Brief

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project and planning background

- 1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by The Hyde Group, to undertake an archaeological watching brief during groundworks associated with the reparation of an existing wall at Rockstone Court, Rockstone Lane, Southampton, SO14 6HZ centred on NGR 442371 112963 (**Fig. 1**).
- 1.1.2 The proposed development was to comprise of the demolition of a retaining wall, and the rebuilding of that wall, and car park surfacing. The wall retains deposits upon which the Rockstone Court car park has been instated, with the car park lying approximately 2 m higher than the ground surface to the north and east. However, upon investigation of the wall and its foundation, following archaeologically monitored excavations, it was determined that the wall could be repaired as opposed to requiring removal.
- 1.1.3 As such the archaeological watching brief was limited to the monitoring of excavations undertaken along the inside of the northern stretch of the wall which revealed modern made ground deposits, as opposed to the groundworks specified within the Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for the project (Wessex Archaeology 2021) which were to comprise a battered dig measuring up to 4 m in width at the top and 2 m in width at the base. Instead, excavations measured c. 8 m in length with a battered side up to 3 m in width at the top by up to 1 m in width at the base, and between 1.50 m and 2.50 m deep (measurements approximate as trench edges too unstable to stand close to).
- 1.1.4 The Planning Archaeologist / Historic Environment Record Officer (PA), archaeological advisor to Southampton City Council (SCC), was consulted during the investigation due to such amendments to the proposed scope of works. All monitoring was undertaken following the advice of the PA and the methods detailed within the WSI were adhered to.
- 1.1.5 The watching brief was carried out as a condition of planning permission, granted by Southampton City Council (19/00971/FUL).

Condition 04 Archaeological evaluation/watching brief work programme (Performance)

The developer will secure the completion of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that the archaeological investigation is completed.

- 1.1.6 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 PA approved the WSI, on behalf of the LPA, prior to fieldwork commencing. The watching brief was undertaken between the 11 and 13 of August 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 at Rockstone Court, Rockstone Lane, Southampton. The site is situated within the ward of Bevois, west of the River Itchen and south of Portswood, within Local Area of Archaeological Potential 7: Bannister's Park. A row of residences belonging to Cranbury Terrace bound the site to the south, with the northern boundary comprising the Rockstone Lane. Residential properties are also positioned to the east, with a dense population of trees forming the western boundary. Onslow Road (A335) is aligned north-east to south-west, located to the east of the site.
- 1.3.2 As noted above (section 1.1.2) the ground levels across the site are variable with the car park mapped approximately 2 m above the ground surface to the north. Within the car park levels are recorded between 16.73 and 16.57 m above Ordnance Datum (aOD). Ground levels on the opposite side of the wall are recorded between 14.59 and 14.13 m aOD.
- 1.3.3 The underlying geology is mapped as sand, silt and clay of the Wittering Formation with no superficial deposits. However, overlying superficial deposits comprising River Terrace Deposits 3 of sand and gravel are recorded to the immediate south (British Geological Survey 2021). During the monitored excavations the natural geological sequence was not reached leading to an inability to confirm the presence of such natural deposits.

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Introduction

- 2.1.1 The PA at SCC, archaeological advisor to the LPA, was consulted in regard of acquiring Historic Environment Record (HER) data during the compilation of the WSI. It was agreed that for the purposes of the WSI the summary archaeological and historical background derived from the consultee planning advice provided by the PA at SCC sufficed.
- 2.1.2 Had the results of the fieldwork been positive, the HER would have been formally consulted for data in line with the advice given by the PA at SCC. However, no archaeological features or deposits were identified during the course of the watching brief. Therefore summary of the consultee planning advice has been included below.
- 2.1.3 The site lies within an Area of Archaeological Potential as defined in the Southampton Local Plan and Core Strategy – LAAP 7 (Bannister's Park). No previous archaeological investigation has been undertaken within the site bounds.

2.2 Archaeological and historical context

- 2.2.1 The site is in Local Area of Archaeological Potential 7 (Bannister's Park), as defined in the Southampton Local Plan and Core Strategy. Prehistoric, Roman and Saxon remains have been found in the general area.
- 2.2.2 The site lies just south of the ancient thoroughfare of Rockstone Lane (MSH4381), first directly mentioned in the late 15th century as Rokesdon Lane. It was an important part of the medieval and post-medieval road network and may also have been a route in earlier



times. It probably followed a natural stream. It was one of the routes to Winchester, and until the late 18th century it was the main road to Botley and Portsmouth. Although the road lay outside the built-up area of the medieval and post-medieval town, activities associated with the town may have taken place along its route. It is known that clay and sand were dug in the vicinity in the 16th and 17th centuries (MSH4382).

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);
- To identify and record the nature, dimensions, and relationship of natural deposits exposed by the archaeological investigation, and assess the potential of those deposits to contain or conceal archaeological evidence;
- 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.

3.2.2 For the purposes of this project, archaeologically significant remains and contexts are generally defined as remains and contexts relating to human use of the area prior to 1850.



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 2021) 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 archaeological watching brief comprised the monitoring of groundworks associated with the proposed demolition and replacement of a retaining wall within the car park at Rockstone Court. Although it was originally proposed that the wall be replaced, the monitored excavations alongside the wall and subsequent investigations established that the existing wall was structurally sound and would only require repointing and refacing.

4.2.2 The watching archaeologist monitored all mechanical excavations within the specified area to the rear of the retaining wall. These comprised, following removal of the car park surface, excavations measuring c. 8 m in length with a battered side up to 3 m in width at the top by up to 1 m in width at the base, and between 1.50 m and 2.50 m deep (measurements approximate as trench edges too unstable to stand close to).

4.2.3 Spoil from machine stripping was visually scanned for the purposes of finds retrieval. As only modern made ground deposits were excavated, no artefacts were encountered.

Recording

4.2.4 No archaeological deposits or features were identified during the works. However, a complete record of all excavated soils was made using Wessex Archaeology's pro forma recording system. These were recorded using the Soil Survey Field Handbook (Soil Survey of England and Wales) and Munsell soil colour chart (hard copy not printouts).

4.2.5 A Leica GNSS connected to Leica's SmartNet service surveyed the location of the investigation. All survey data is recorded in OS National Grid coordinates and heights above OD (Newlyn), as defined by OSTN15 and OSGM15, with a three-dimensional accuracy of at least 50 mm.

4.2.6 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 Finds and environmental strategies

4.3.1 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 and environmental remains was in general accordance with: *Guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials* (ClfA 2014b), *Environmental Archaeology: A Guide to the Theory and Practice of Methods, from Sampling and Recovery to Post-excavation* (English Heritage 2011) and ClfA's *Toolkit for Specialist Reporting* (Type 1: Description).



4.4 Monitoring

- 4.4.1 The PA at SCC 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 PA at SCC.

5 STRATIGRAPHIC EVIDENCE

5.1 Introduction

- 5.1.1 All deposits observed pertain to the construction of the modern retaining wall. The deposits are summarised below with full descriptions of individual contexts detailed in the results table (**Appendix 1**).

5.2 Soil sequence and natural deposits

- 5.2.1 The modern retaining wall (**Plate 2**) of breeze block construction was revealed to an approximately depth of 2.50 m bgl (13.5944 m aOD) at which depth concrete foundations / pad were observed and digging stopped. It appears that a similar construction method to the one proposed for the rebuilding plan was used to construct the retaining wall; it seems that the wall was built and made ground deposits were built up/ deposited against the inside face of the wall and the carpark surface was constructed on top.
- 5.2.2 The initial made ground deposit (**105; Plates 3-6**) against the wall consisted of grey-brown (10YR 2/2) silty loam mixed with Type 1 crushed stone between 0.7 m and 1.50 m thick. The was overlain by a layer (**104**) of broken red bricks, plastic and other construction debris 0.15 m thick which appeared along the majority of the length of the trench. Over this, a large deposit of red-brown (5YR 4/8) gravel and sand (**103**) made up the majority of the backfill against the wall, measuring 0.50 m thick. This deposit contained lenses of grey-brown sand loam which suggest the deposit sloped steeply against the wall (**Plate 4**). Patches of light yellow (5R 7/8) fine sand (**102**) appeared sporadically along the length of the trench and varied in thickness between 0.05m and 0.15 m. The final made ground deposit (**101**) consisted of a pale reddish-brown (10R 5/4) type 1 crushed stone approximately 0.20 m thick, on top of which the carpark was constructed.
- 5.2.3 No archaeological features or deposits were encountered during the watching brief.

6 FINDS EVIDENCE

- 6.1.1 All deposits encountered during the watching brief pertain to modern construction works, and no archaeological finds were retrieved or present.

7 ENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE

- 7.1.1 No deposits suitable for environmental sampling were encountered during the watching brief.

8 CONCLUSIONS

8.1 Summary

- 8.1.1 The archaeological watching brief was successful in identifying that no archaeological features or deposits were exposed during the building works to the retaining wall. All deposits revealed were modern and contemporary with the construction of the existing retaining wall. On inspection of the wall after the initial excavation it was decided that the



wall was in better condition than expected and repointing / refacing to the exposed outer face would be sufficient repair.

8.2 Discussion

8.2.1 The excavations carried out along the inside of the wall revealed a series of modern made ground deposits associated with the construction of the existing retaining wall, and levelling up to create the current car park surface and ground level. There was no evidence of any intact archaeological features or deposits being present within the area of excavation observed.

8.2.2 It is possible that archaeological deposits and features survive at a greater depth, although they are likely to have been heavy disturbed and truncated by modern activity in the area.

9 ARCHIVE STORAGE AND CURATION

9.1 Museum

9.1.1 The archive resulting from the watching brief is currently held at the offices of Wessex Archaeology in Salisbury. Southampton City Archaeological Collections has agreed in principle to accept the archive on completion of the project, under the site code **SOU 1912**. 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.

9.2 Preparation of the archive

Physical archive

9.2.1 The physical archive, which includes paper records will be prepared following the standard conditions for the acceptance of excavated archaeological material by Southampton City Archaeological Collections, and in general following nationally recommended guidelines (SMA 1995; ClfA 2014c; Brown 2011).

9.2.2 All archive elements will be marked with the **SOU Site Code (SOU 1912)**, and a full index will be prepared. The physical archive currently comprises the following:

- 1 file/document case of paper records

Digital archive

9.2.3 The digital archive generated by the project, which comprises born-digital data (eg site records, survey data, databases and spreadsheets, photographs and reports), will be deposited with a Trusted Digital Repository, in this instance the Archaeology Data Service (ADS), to ensure its long-term curation. Digital data will be prepared following ADS guidelines (ADS 2013 and online guidance) and accompanied by metadata.

9.3 Selection strategy

9.3.1 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, ie the retained archive should fulfil the requirements of both future researchers and the receiving Museum.



9.3.2 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'. It should be agreed by all stakeholders (Wessex Archaeology's internal specialists, external specialists, local authority, museum) and fully documented in the project archive.

9.3.3 In this instance, given the relatively low level of finds recovery, the selection process has been deferred until after the fieldwork stage was completed. Project-specific proposals for selection are presented below. These proposals are based on recommendations by Wessex Archaeology's internal specialists and external specialists and will be updated in line with any further comment by other stakeholders (museum, local authority). The selection strategy will be fully documented in the project archive.

9.3.4 Any material not selected for retention may be used for teaching or reference collections by Wessex Archaeology.

Finds

9.3.5 None

Palaeoenvironmental material

9.3.6 None

Documentary records

9.3.7 Paper records comprise site registers (other pro-forma site records are digital), drawings and reports (Written Scheme of Investigation, client report). All will be retained and deposited with the project archive.

Digital data

9.3.8 The digital data comprise site records (tablet-recorded on site) in spreadsheet format; finds records in spreadsheet format; survey data; photographs; reports. All will be deposited, although site photographs will be subject to selection to eliminate poor quality and duplicated images, and any others not considered directly relevant to the archaeology of the site.

9.4 Security copy

9.4.1 In line with current best practice (eg, 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.

9.5 OASIS

9.5.1 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 PA at SCC 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.



10 COPYRIGHT

10.1 Archive and report copyright

- 10.1.1 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*.
- 10.1.2 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.

10.2 Third party data copyright

- 10.2.1 This document and the project archive may contain material that is non-Wessex Archaeology copyright (eg, 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.



REFERENCES

- ADS 2013 *Caring for Digital Data in Archaeology: a guide to good practice*. Archaeology Data Service and Digital Antiquity Guides to Good Practice
- British Geological Survey *Geology of Britain Viewer* <http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html> (accessed 01/09/2021)
- Brown, D H 2011 *Archaeological Archives: a guide to best practice in creation, compilation, transfer and curation* (revised edition). Archaeological Archives Forum
- ClfA 2014a *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief* (revised edition June 2020). Reading, Chartered Institute for Archaeologists
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- SMA 1993 *Selection, Retention and Dispersal of Archaeological Collections*. Society of Museum Archaeologists
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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Trench Table

Trench No 1		Length 8 m	Width 2 m	Depth 2.5 m
Easting 442375.03		Northing 112980.53		m OD 16.24
Context Number	Fill Of/Filled With	Interpretative Category	Description	Depth BGL
101		Made ground	Pale reddish-brown (10R 5 / 4) type 1 crushed stone approximately 0.20 m thick, carpark on top	0.00–0.20
102		Made ground	Light yellow (5R 7 / 8) fine sand. Patchy. Varied in thickness from 0.05-0.15m	0.20–0.35
103		Made ground	Red-brown (5YR 4 / 8) gravel and sand. made up the majority of the backfill against the wall, measuring 0.50 m thick. This deposit contained lenses of grey-brown sand loam which suggest the deposit sloped steeply against the wall	0.35–0.85
104		Made ground	Broken red bricks, plastic and other construction debris	0.85–1.00
105		Made ground	Grey-brown (10YR 2 / 2) silty loam mixed with Type 1 crushed stone between 0.7 m and 1 m thick. Small amount of modern building debris	1.00–2.50+



Appendix 2 OASIS record

OASIS ID: wessexar1-429424

Project details

Project name	Rockstone Court, Rockstone Lane, Southampton
Short description of the project	Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by The Hyde Group, to undertake an archaeological watching brief during groundworks associated with the demolition and reinstatement of a retaining wall at Rockstone Court, Rockstone Lane, Southampton, SO14 6HZ. The ground surface within the development area lies c. 2m higher than the neighbouring ground level to the north and east and which is supported by a retaining wall. The development was proposed to comprise of the removal of material behind the existing retaining wall, demolition of the wall, and the installation of a new retaining wall, and reinstatement of material back to the original level. However, following excavation of the material behind the retaining wall under archaeological supervision, it was determined that the existing wall was structurally sound and could be repaired by refacing and repointing its external faces, and therefore negating the need for its removal. The archaeological watching brief monitored the excavation of the material behind the retaining wall, which revealed wholly modern made ground deposits most likely associated with the original construction of the existing wall and therefore no archaeological features or material was observed. With the revision of the proposed works and presence of wholly modern deposits the watching brief was curtailed following consultation with the Planning Archaeologist at Southampton City Council
Project dates	Start: 11-08-2021 End: 13-08-2021
Previous/future work	No / No
Any associated project reference codes	SOU 1912 - Sitecode
Any associated project reference codes	19/00971/FUL - Planning Application No.
Any associated project reference codes	255170 - Contracting Unit No.
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	None
Current Land use	Residential 1 - General Residential
Investigation type	""Watching Brief""
Prompt	Planning condition

Project location

Country	England
Site location	HAMPSHIRE SOUTHAMPTON SOUTHAMPTON Rockstone Court, Rockstone Lane, Southampton
Postcode	SO14 6HZ



Site coordinates SU 42371 12963 50.914023042702 -1.39721614878 50 54 50 N 001 23 49 W
Point

Project creators

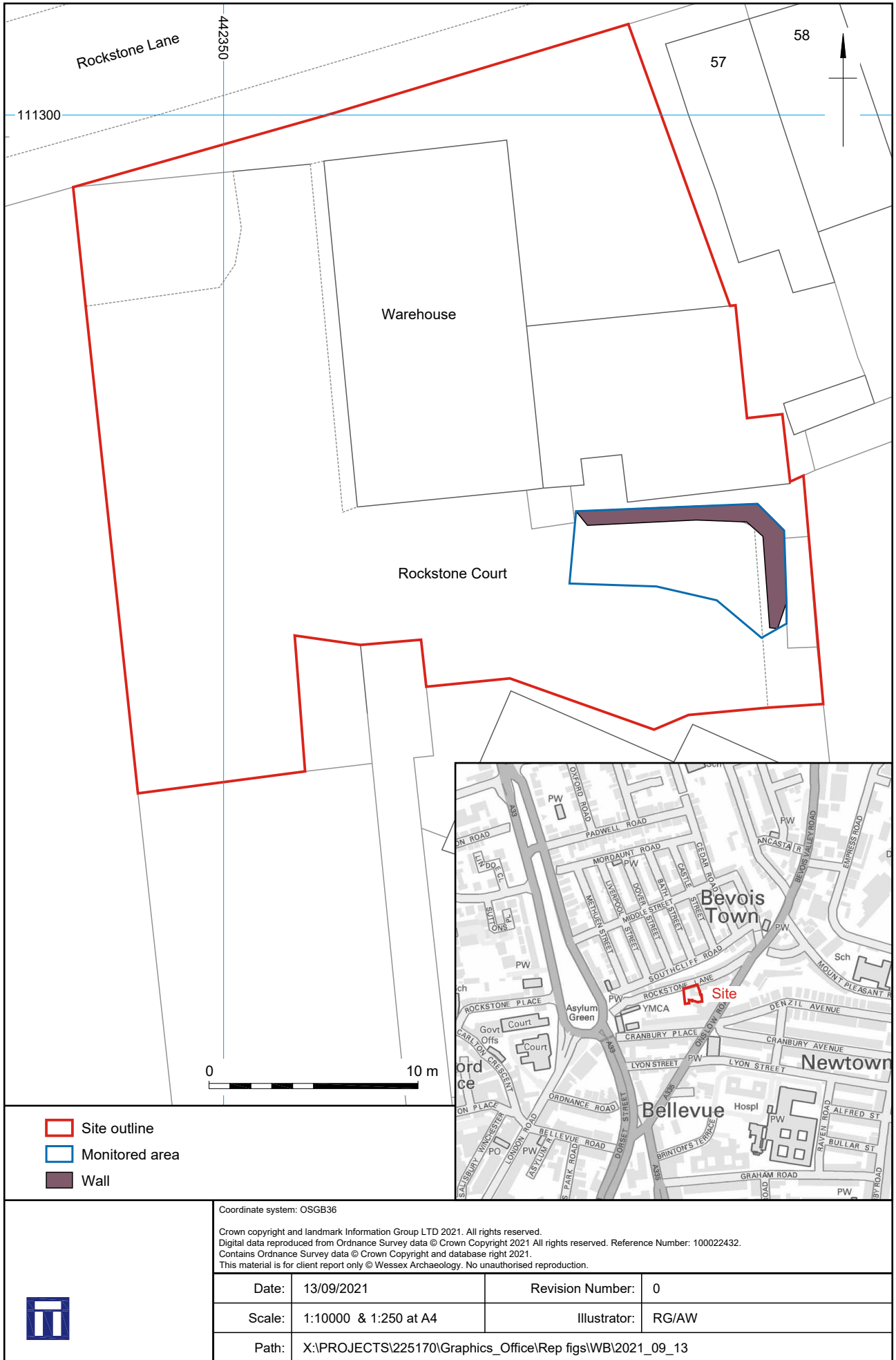
Name of Organisation Wessex Archaeology
Project brief originator Southampton City Council
Project design originator Wessex Archaeology
Project director/manager Damian De Rosa
Project supervisor Virva Lompolo
Type of sponsor/funding body Independent Housing Association
Name of sponsor/funding body The Hyde Group

Project archives

Physical Archive Exists? No
Digital Archive recipient Southampton City Archaeological Collections
Digital Media available "Images raster / digital photography","Text"
Paper Archive recipient Southampton City Archaeological Collections
Paper Media available "Unpublished Text","Unspecified Archive"

Project bibliography 1

Publication type Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title Rockstone Court, Rockstone Court, Southampton: Archaeological Watching Brief
Author(s)/Editor(s) Legg, E. Capps, R.
Other bibliographic details Unpublished client report ref. 225170.03
Date 2021
Issuer or publisher Wessex Archaeology
Place of issue or publication Salisbury
Description A4 bound booklet



Site location plan

Figure 1



Plate 1: Pre-works site conditions, view from the west



Plate 2: South facing section of retaining wall


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	Scale:	Not to scale	Illustrator:	AW
	Path:	X:\PROJECTS\225170\Graphics_Office\Rep figs\WB\2021_09_13		



Plate 3: North facing section of the trench, with 2 m scale



Plate 4: West facing section of the trench, with 2 m scale



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Plate 5: Oblique view from the north-west of the north facing section of the trench, with 2 m scale



Plate 6: Trench from the west, with 2 m scale

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	Scale:	Not to scale	Illustrator:	AW
	Path:	X:\PROJECTS\225170\Graphics_Office\Rep figs\WB\2021_09_13		



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