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## Southampton Archaeology Unit

Report 846

### Archaeological watching brief at 150-156 Fratton Road, Portsmouth, 2007/12

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Client: Rok



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# **Report on the archaeological watching brief at, 150-156 Fratton Road, Portsmouth, 2007/12.**

By EL McDonald BA MA

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Archaeology Unit report	846
Ordnance Survey grid reference	NGR SU651004
SCC accession number	A.2007/12
Planning application	A*23832/AF

## **1. Summary**

The Archaeology Unit of Southampton City Council carried out an archaeological watching brief at 150-156 Fratton Road, Portsmouth associated with the construction of new housing units. A total of 27 trenches were dug. The earliest archaeological evidence was from the 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> century and consisted of two pits situated near the centre of the site. Other 18<sup>th</sup> century rubbish pits were found. 19<sup>th</sup> century pottery, a stoneware bottle, bricks, and cellars suggest the site was built up in that period.

## **2. Introduction**

The Archaeology Unit of Southampton City Council carried out an archaeological watching brief at, 150-156 Fratton Road, Portsmouth (fig 1) on behalf of Portsmouth Housing Association. The observations were made by EL McDonald BA MA between 26/07/07 and the 16/08/07. The project was managed by J I Russel MIFA. The pottery and clay tobacco pipe was scanned by Dr A. Russel BA PhD MIFA.

The site is within Local Area of Archaeological Importance 3. This area is a long north–south strip along Fratton Road covering the area of the medieval settlements of Fratton at its south end and Buckland/Kingston at its north.

## **3. Aims of the investigation**

The aims of the investigation were principally to investigate the presence or absence of human use of the area, and the date, type, state of preservation, and extent of that use; to recover associated objects; and to record such evidence as did survive. In addition, the nature, dimensions, and relationship of natural deposits were to be noted and recorded.

#### 4. Watching brief methodology

All archaeological records were made using the Southampton City Council archaeological recording system (SMART system). The colours of deposits were recorded using the Munsell Soil Color Chart and these are used in this report (Munsell Color 1975). The archive will be stored with Portsmouth City Museums and Record Office on completion of the project.

#### 5. Site location and topography

The site is in the Fratton area of Portsmouth. It is on the east side of Fratton Road, north of its junction with Sandringham Road.



Figure 1: Site location (site in pink).

The site is on Portsea Island which has Valley Brickearth above Plateau Gravel as the surface geological deposits (Ordnance Survey 1987). They are above the Bagshot Beds. The modern ground surface is at about 6.7m OD and slopes gently down to the south.

#### 6. Historical and archaeological background

The site is within Local Area of Archaeological Importance 3. This area is a long north–south strip along Fratton Road covering the area of the medieval settlements of Fratton at its south end and Buckland/Kingston at its north. The area is defined principally as one of importance for medieval

and post-medieval archaeology. Fratton is thought to take its name from a Saxon 'Frodda'. The mother church for the whole Portsea Island area was St Mary which was endowed in 1164. The Manor of Fratton was in existence by the mid-13th century.

Buckland (*Bochelard*) is mentioned in the Domesday Book and Kingston is mentioned in late 12<sup>th</sup> century documents. Edward's map of Portsmouth published in 1716 shows buildings on the site.

In 1801 Fratton was a rural retreat for prosperous townfolk, adjacent to the village of market-gardners, farmers and rural craftsmen. By 1851 Fratton Road was a ribbon of retired servicemen and dockyard labourers (Webb, Quail, Haskell and Riley 2001, 33). In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century houses stood on the Fratton Road frontage with yards to the rear.

## **7. Results of the watching brief**

### *7.1. Introduction*

A total of 27 trenches were dug. Trench 5 was a level reduction of 1m across the majority of the site. The rest were foundation trenches.

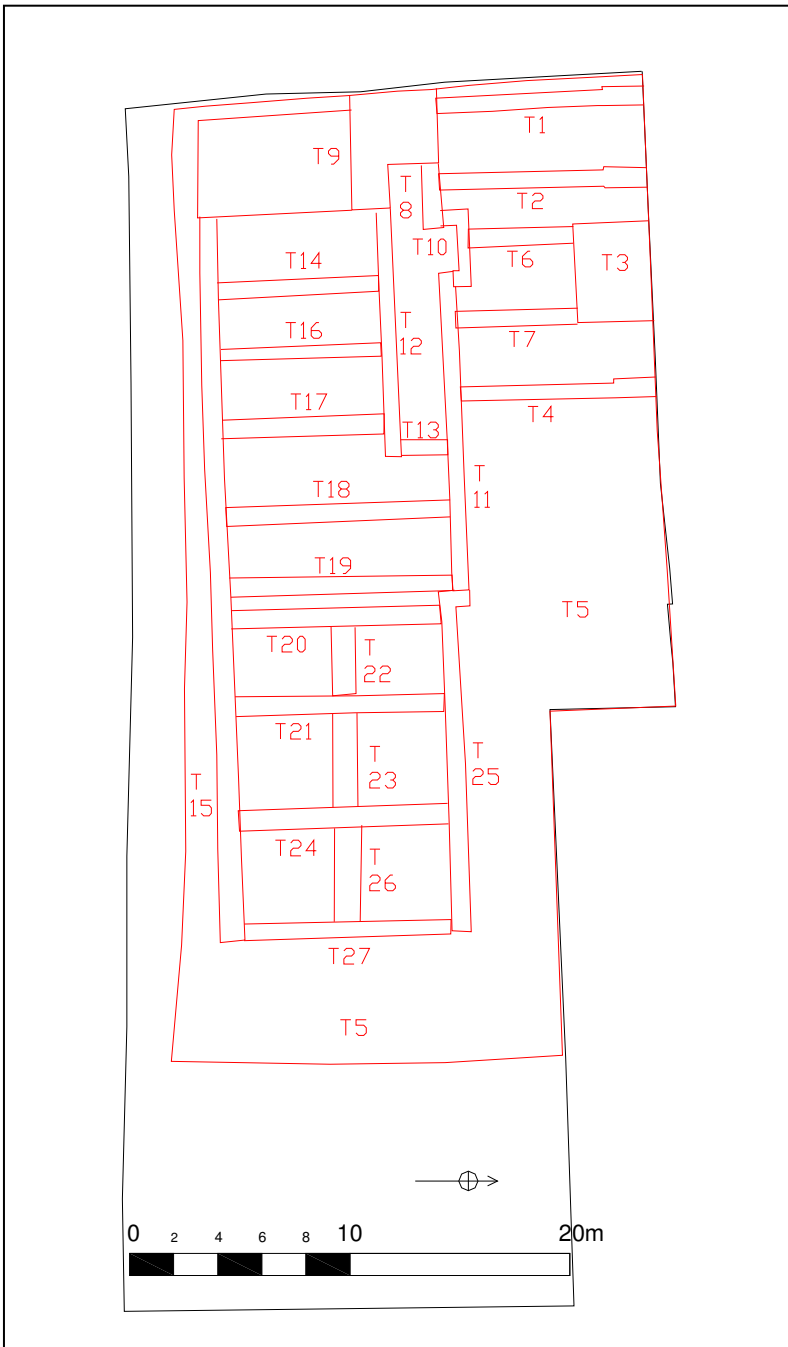


Figure 2: Trench plan.

### 7.2 Phase 1. Natural. Contexts 2 and 3

The earliest deposits encountered were layers 2 and 3 (Fig 3). A sandy loam, layer 3, was observed in trenches 1, 2 and 4, in the north of the site. It was yellowish brown in colour (10YR 5/4), was at least 1 m thick, and was situated 1.3m below the surface. A clay loam layer, context

2, was situated 200mm from the surface. It was observed in the majority of trenches. It was yellowish brown in colour (10YR 5/8) and was up to 1.3m thick in places.

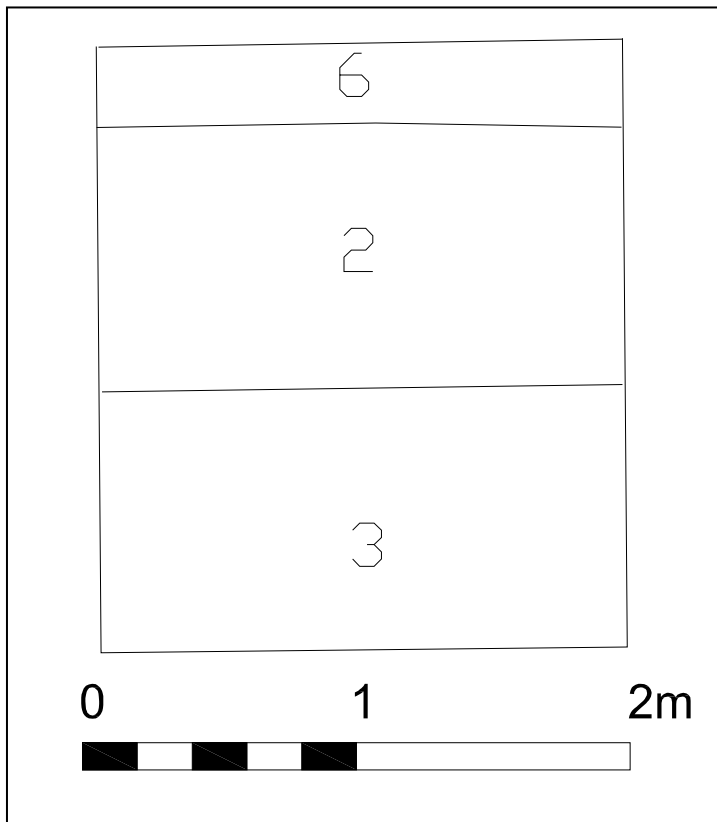


Figure 3: East-facing section of trench 1.

### *7.3 Phase 2. 16-17<sup>th</sup> century features and fills. Contexts 14, (15), 19, (20), (21)*

A pit, context 14, was observed in trench 7 in the northern part of the site. It cut through natural, context 2, and was sealed below a clay loam layer, context 16 (Fig 5). The eastern and western edges of this pit were not observed as they continued outside the boundary of the trench. It was not bottomed, so its full dimensions were not observed. It was 2.07m wide, at least 1 m long and 500mm deep. The sides sloped at a 30 degree angle from vertical.



Figure 4: East-facing section of trench 7, showing pit 14 cutting 2.

Pit 14 was filled with a very dark grey (10YR 3/1) clay loam, context 15, which included fragments of oyster shell, brick, roof tile and pot. The pottery consisted of a 16-17<sup>th</sup> century fragment of red earthenware. The internal glaze, and burning on the outside suggest it was a cooking pot. The roof tile fragment had mortar on all sides including a broken edge showing it may have been re-used in later building work.

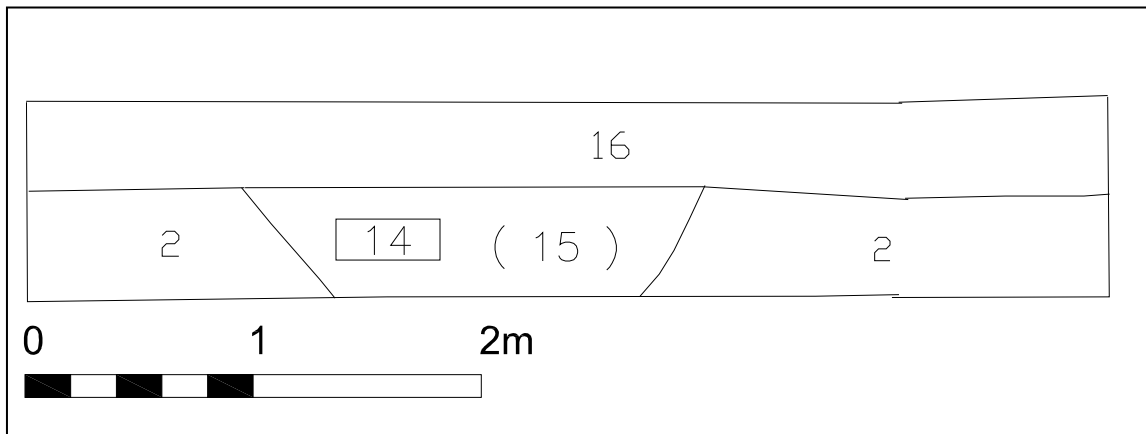


Figure 5: East facing section of trench 7.

A large, irregular, shallow pit, context 19, was found in trenches 4, 11, 12, 13, 16, 17 and 18 in the centre of the site. It cut through the natural, context 2, and was sealed below clay loam layer 16. It



was 9.9m long, 8.5m wide and 0.8m deep. The sides sloped at a 30 degree angle from vertical and the base was near flat.



Figure 6: East-facing section of trench 12, showing pit 19 and chalky fill 21.

Pit 19 had two fills, contexts 20 and 21. Fill 20 was a dark greyish brown (10YR 4/2) clay loam, which included flint nodules and a few fragments of brick and tile. The roof tile was dated to the 16-17<sup>th</sup> century and not local to Portsmouth but was from the south Hampshire area. The brick was local and was dated to the post-medieval period.

Fill 21 was above 20 and was a light grey (10YR 7/1) chalky fill (Fig 6). It contained very few fragments of brick and pot. One fragment of pot was a small sherd of red earthenware with an internal glaze, dated to the early post-medieval period.

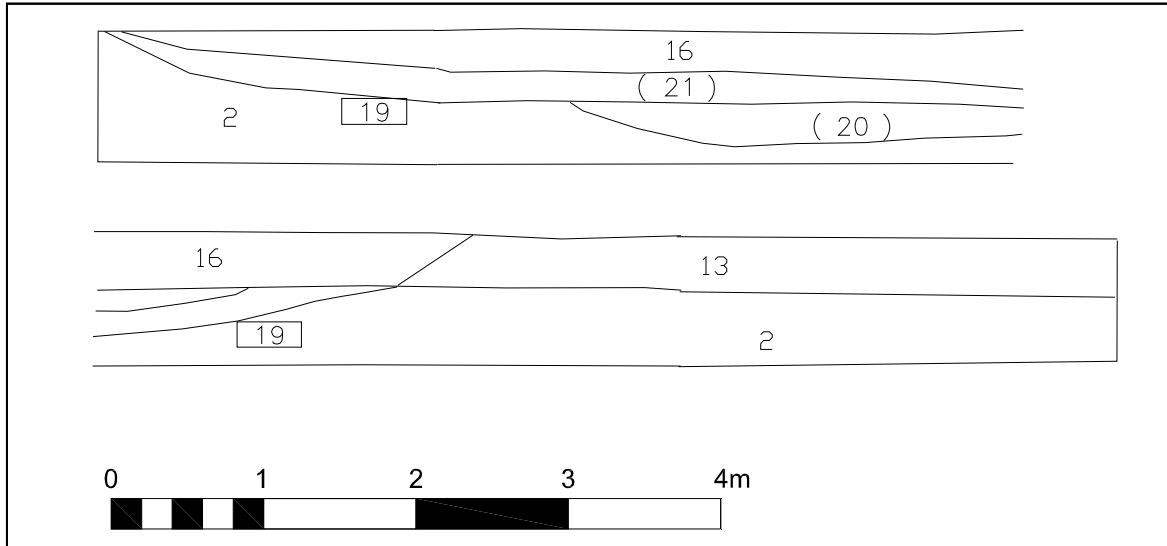


Figure 7: East-facing section of trench 12, showing pit 19.

*7.4 Phase 3. 17-18<sup>th</sup> century layer. Context 7*

Clay loam layer 7 was situated in the western section of trench 5. It was very dark grey in colour (10YR 3/1), was observed 300mm from the surface, and was 260mm thick (Fig 8). It contained fragments of late 18<sup>th</sup> century clay pipe, roof tile, brick and oyster shell. The roof tile had some mortar on a broken edge which suggests it was re-used.

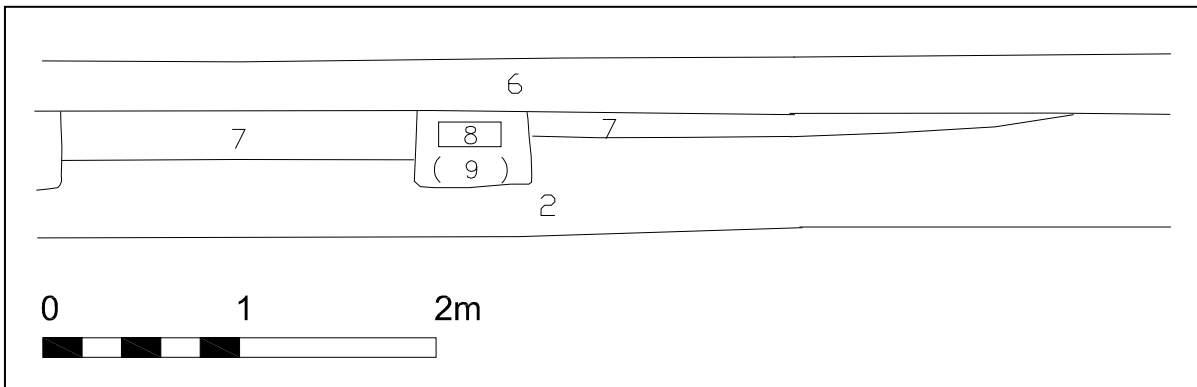


Figure 8: East-facing section of trench 5.

*7.5 Phase 4. 19<sup>th</sup> century cellars and features. Contexts 25, (26), 4, (5), 6, 16, 17, (18), 23, (24), 22*

A pit, context 25, was found in the west-facing section in trench 21 in the east of the site. It cut through the natural, context 2, and was sealed below overburden 1. It was 1.1m wide and 280mm

deep. The sides sloped at a 20 degree angle from vertical and the base was near flat (Figs 9 and 10).



Figure 9: West-facing section of trench 21, contexts 25 and 26

Pit 25 was filled with a very dark grey (10YR 3/1) clay loam, context 26, which included fragments of coal, early 19<sup>th</sup> century brick and pot. The pottery was a residual fragment of early verwood which had a green internal glaze dated 17-18<sup>th</sup> century.

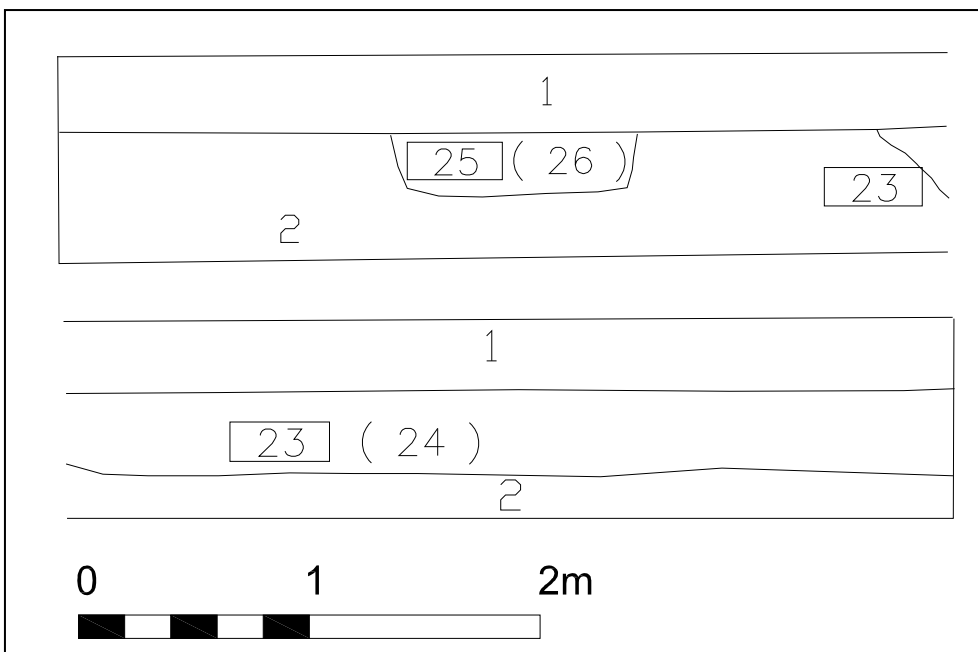


Figure 10: West-facing section of trench 21

Two cellars, contexts 4, (5), 17 and (18) were observed. The construction trench for cellar 4 was found in trench 3, on the Fratton Road street frontage in the north-west part of the site. It cut through context 2. It was 4.5m long, 3.5m wide and 1m deep. The construction trench contained the brick cellar walls, context 5. The bricks from this wall were dated 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Construction trench 17 was observed in trench 9. It was 7m in length, 4.4m wide and 2m deep. It cut contexts 2 and 3 and contained the brick cellar walls, context 18. The bricks from this wall were dated 19<sup>th</sup> century.



Figure 11: East-facing section of trench 9, contexts 17 and 18

A brick layer, context 6, was seen in the north-facing section of trench 5 (Fig 8). It was 20m long and 295mm thick. The bricks were dated to the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It may have been hard-standing for the house that previously stood in this area of the site.

Clay loam layer 16 was observed in trenches 7, 10, 11, 12, 13, 16, 17 and 18 in the middle of the site. It was very dark grey in colour (10YR 3/1) and was 400mm thick. It contained fragments of tile, brick, 19<sup>th</sup> century pot, coal, chalk and oyster shell.

A large trench, context 23, was observed in trenches 5, 19, 20, 21, 24 and 27 in the eastern end of the site (fig 10). It cut through natural, context 2, and was sealed below the overburden, context 1. The eastern and southern edges of this pit were not observed as they continued outside the boundary of the trenches, so its full dimensions were not observed. It was at least 16.2 m long, 5.2m wide and 400mm deep. The sides sloped at a 30 degree angle from vertical and the base was near flat.

Trench 23 was filled with a dark grey (10YR 4/1) clay loam, context 24, which included fragments of brick, concrete, glass and pot. One fragment of pottery from this context was dated mid to late 19<sup>th</sup> century.

An unstratified, complete, stoneware bottle dated early 19<sup>th</sup> century was found in the east of the site.

*7.6 Phase 5. Modern features and overburden. Contexts 1, 8, (9), 10, (11), 12, (13)*

Modern foundation trench 8 containing a concrete foundation (9) ran across trench 15 cutting layer 7.

Modern drainage and electric trenches 10, (11), 12 and (13) cut across trenches 5, 12, 16, and 17, disrupting feature 19 and layer 16.

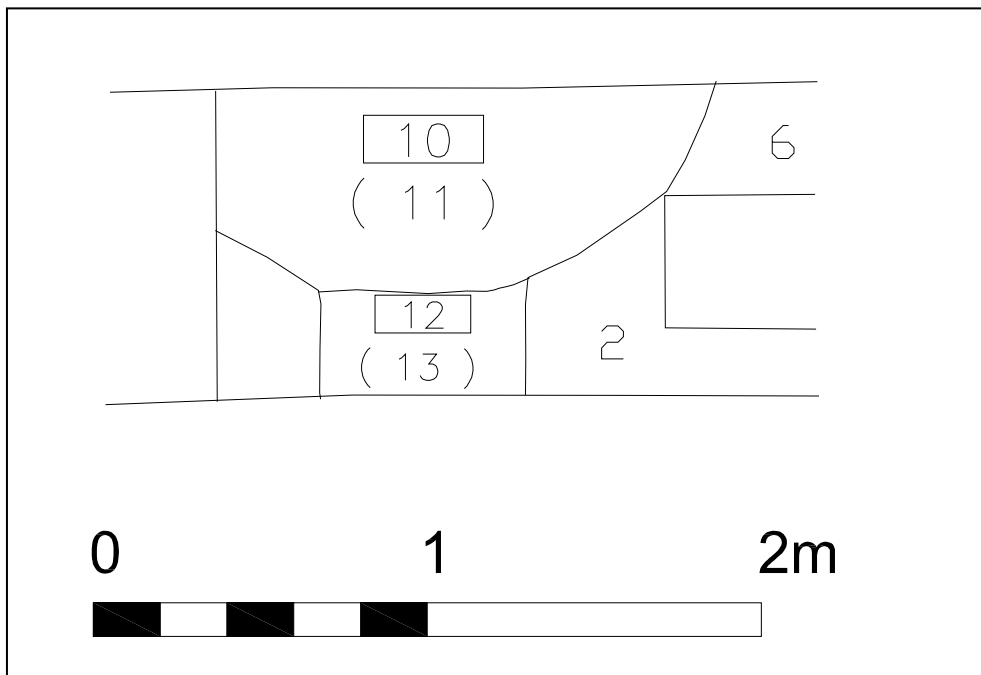


Figure 12: East-facing section of trench 5

Clay loam, overburden layer, context 1, was observed across the majority of the site. It was brown in colour (10YR 5/3) and was 300mm thick in places.

## **8. Conclusions**

The earliest archaeological evidence was two sherds of pottery and a fragment of roof tile dated to the 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> century, which came from two pits situated near the centre of the site. One was probably a rubbish pit; the other was 9.9m long, 8.5m wide and 0.8m deep and was perhaps a brickearth quarry pit.

Evidence of 18<sup>th</sup> century rubbish pits was also found. A fragment of 17-18<sup>th</sup> century Verwood pottery was found in a further pit in the east of the site. One fragment of roof tile and two clay pipe stems of the late 18<sup>th</sup> century were found in a layer in the centre of the site. The presence of 19<sup>th</sup> century pottery, a stoneware bottle, bricks and cellars, suggest the site was built up in that period.

## **Bibliography**

Munsell Color, 1975: *Munsell Soil Color Charts*, Baltimore.

Ordnance Survey, 1987: *Geological Survey of Great Britain (England and Wales) - drift*. Sheet 315.

Webb J., Quail S., Haskell P, Riley R. 2001, *The Spirit of Portsmouth: A History*.

**Appendix 1. Context list**

Number/letter codes (eg 10YR 3/1) = Munsell soil colour codes.

sa = stone abundance – 0 = virtually stone free; 5 = gravel

<b>Context</b>	<b>Above</b>	<b>Below</b>	<b>Description</b>
1	2 (5) (11) (13) (18) (24) (26)		Overburden. Clay loam .sa.4
2	3	2, 7, 16	Natural brick earth. Clay loam .sa.1
3		2	Natural gravel. Sandy loam .sa.3
4	2	(5)	Construction trench for cellar
(5)	4	1	Brick cellar
6	7 (9)	10	Brick and concrete from previous building
7	2	6, 8	Dark lens. Clay loam, sa2
8	7	(9)	Foundation trench
(9)	8	6	Concrete foundation
10	2, 6 (13) 12	(11)	Electric trench
(11)	10	1	Fill of trench, including pipe, clay loam, sa.3
12	2	(13)	Modern drainage trench
(13)	12	1 (10)	Fill of trench, including pipe, clay loam, sa.2
14	2	(15)	Large pit / trench
(15)	14	16	Dark, soil fill. Clay loam, sa.3
16	2 (15) (21)		Dark soil lenses. Clay loam, sa.2
17	2, 3	(18)	Construction trench for cellar
(18)	17	1	Cellar wall
19	2	(20) (21)	Large shallow pit
(20)	19	(21)	Dark, clay loam fill. Clay loam, sa.1
(21)	(20)	16	Chalky, sandy loam fill, sa.2
22			Unstratified
23	2	(24)	Large pit.
(24)	23	1	Dark, clay loam fill, sa.3
25	2	(26)	Pit
(26)	25	1	Dark, clay loam fill, sa.2



**Appendix 2. Finds list**

<b>Context</b>	<b>Material</b>	<b>Find</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Weight (grams)</b>	<b>Description</b>
3	POT	FRAG	1	2	Red earthenware. Internal glaze. Early post medieval
7	CRMC	TILR	1	27	Mortar on broken edge. Re-used. Post medieval
7	PCLY	TPIP	2	6	Stem. Late 18 <sup>th</sup> century
15	CRMC	TILR	1	170	Mortar on all sides. Re-used
15	POT	FRAG	1	5	16 <sup>th</sup> – 17 <sup>th</sup> . Dutch? Red earthenware. Internal glaze, burnt on outside.
18	CRMC	BRIC	1	2435	Internal brick. Mid 19 <sup>th</sup> century
20	CRMC	TILR	1	8	Roof tile. Hants. 16-17 <sup>th</sup> century
20	CRMC	BRIC	1	43	Local. Post med
22	POT	BOYL	1	175	English stoneware. Early 19 <sup>th</sup> century
24	POT	FRAG	1	82	Mid-late 19 <sup>th</sup> century. Glazed
26	POT	FRAG	1	29	Early Verwood. 17-18 <sup>th</sup> century. Internal green glaze
26	CRMC	BRIC	2	20	Early 19 <sup>th</sup> century
26	STON	COAL	2	4	