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Southampton Archaeology Unit

Report: 924

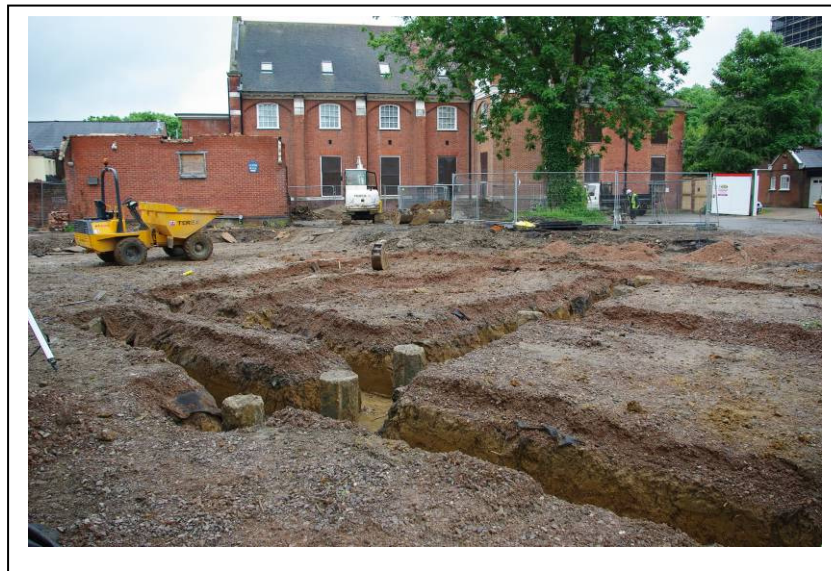
Archaeological watching brief at 247 Fratton Road,
Portsmouth. 2008 / 158

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2009

Client: Portsmouth Housing
Association



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Summary Statement

Portsmouth Housing Association wished to construct flats on land to the north of the vicarage associated with St Mary's Church Fratton, Portsmouth, Hampshire (NGR 6500 0090). The site was adjacent to the Glebe Hall. An archaeological watching brief was required by Portsmouth City Council (planning reference 07/01233/FUL) to ensure that any archaeologically significant remains uncovered by the development were recorded. Southampton City Council Archaeology Unit carried out the work on behalf of Brymor Contractors Ltd.

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.

The site was situated within the glebe lands of the nearby parish church, thought to have Saxon origins, but nothing of great archaeological interest was observed. The London Clay was situated 0.6m below the surface and was at least 1.1m thick. The weathered natural contained a fragment of burnt flint and above it the topsoil contained finds from the 19th century.

The archive will be stored by Portsmouth City Council Museum and Record Office under the Accession Number 2008/158.

Archaeological watching brief at 247 Fratton Road, Portsmouth. 2008/158

Dr A Russel BA PhD MIFA and E L McDonald BA MA

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1. Summary

The Archaeology Unit of Southampton City Council (Southampton Archaeology) carried out an archaeological watching brief on groundworks for construction of flats at 247 Fratton Road, Portsmouth for Portsmouth Housing Association. The site was situated within the glebe lands of the nearby parish church, thought to have Saxon origins, but nothing of great archaeological interest was observed. Natural was situated 0.6m below the surface and was at least 1.1m thick. The weathered natural contained a fragment of burnt flint and above it the topsoil contained finds from the 19th century.

2. Introduction

The Archaeology Unit of Southampton City Council carried out an archaeological watching brief at 247 Fratton Road, Portsmouth on behalf of Portsmouth Housing Association (fig 1). The observations were made by Dr A Russel BA PhD MIFA and E L McDonald BA MA between the 9/08/08 and 7/01/09. The project was managed by Dr A Russel BA PhD MIFA.

3. Aims of the investigation

The aim of the work was to determine the presence or absence of archaeological features, structures, deposits, artefacts or ecofacts within the

area of groundworks. Any such remains were to be recorded and artefacts recovered.

4. Watching brief methodology

The methodology followed that specified in the Scheme of Investigation. The archaeological work on site consisted of observing and recording all groundworks. All archaeological records were made using the Southampton City Council archaeological recording system. The colours of deposits were recorded using the Munsell Soil Colour Chart and these are used in this report (Munsell Colour 1975).

5. Site location and geology

The site is located to the west of Fratton Road and south of Lake Road (fig 1). The surface geological deposits in the area of the site are Aeolian deposits (brickearth), overlying London Clay (British Geological Survey, 1987 Sheet 331). The modern ground surface is at about 7m OD.

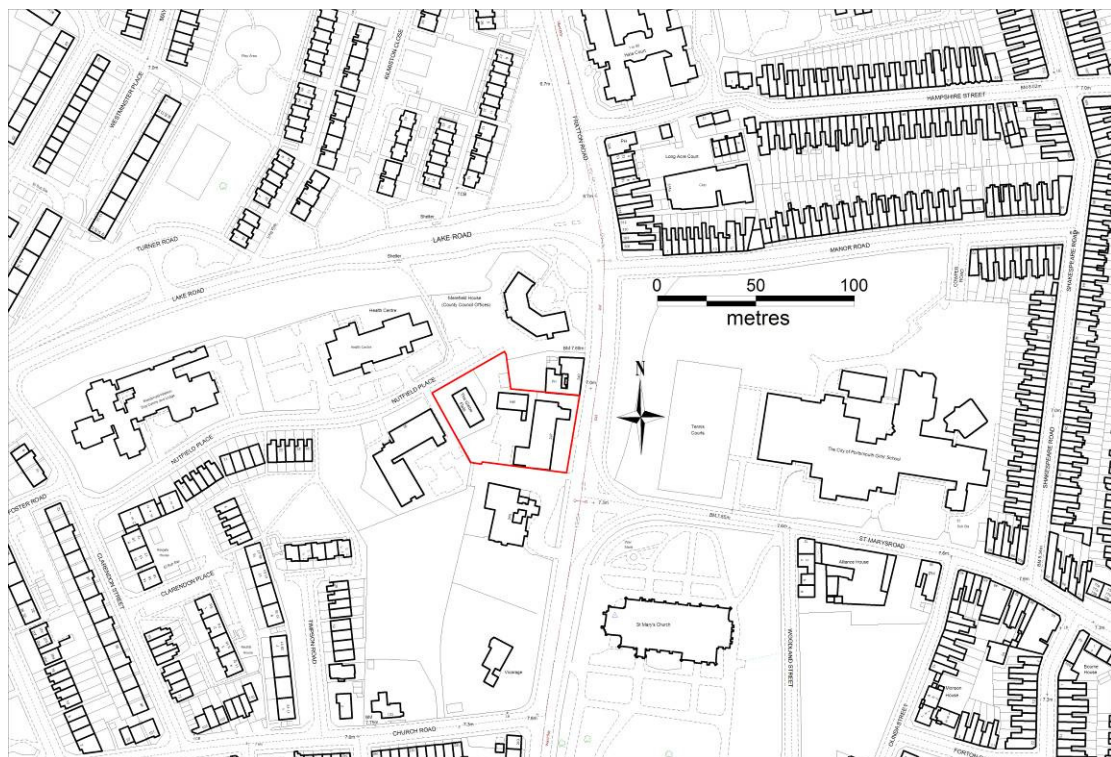


Figure 1: Site location

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6. Historical and archaeological background

6.1 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 the 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.

6.2 The site lies adjacent to the vicarage, and across the road from the site of the medieval church.

6.3 To the northeast of the site a Neolithic flint axe was found at Sultan Road, Fratton (Portsmouth Museum SMR ref 196).

6.4 To the southwest of the site, within the Vicarage grounds, medieval pottery was recovered from a watching brief at 133 Church Road (Portsmouth Museum Accession no 208/107).

6.5 To the north of the site at 101-115 Kingston Road medieval pottery and post-medieval finds were recovered from a watching brief (Whitehead 2004).

7. Results of the watching brief

7.1. Introduction

A total of 20 trenches were dug by mechanical digger for the footings. Trenches 1 to 16 were all 0.6m wide and 0.9m deep. Trenches 17 to 19 were 1m wide and 2m deep. Trench 20 was 1.5m wide and 2m deep (fig 2).

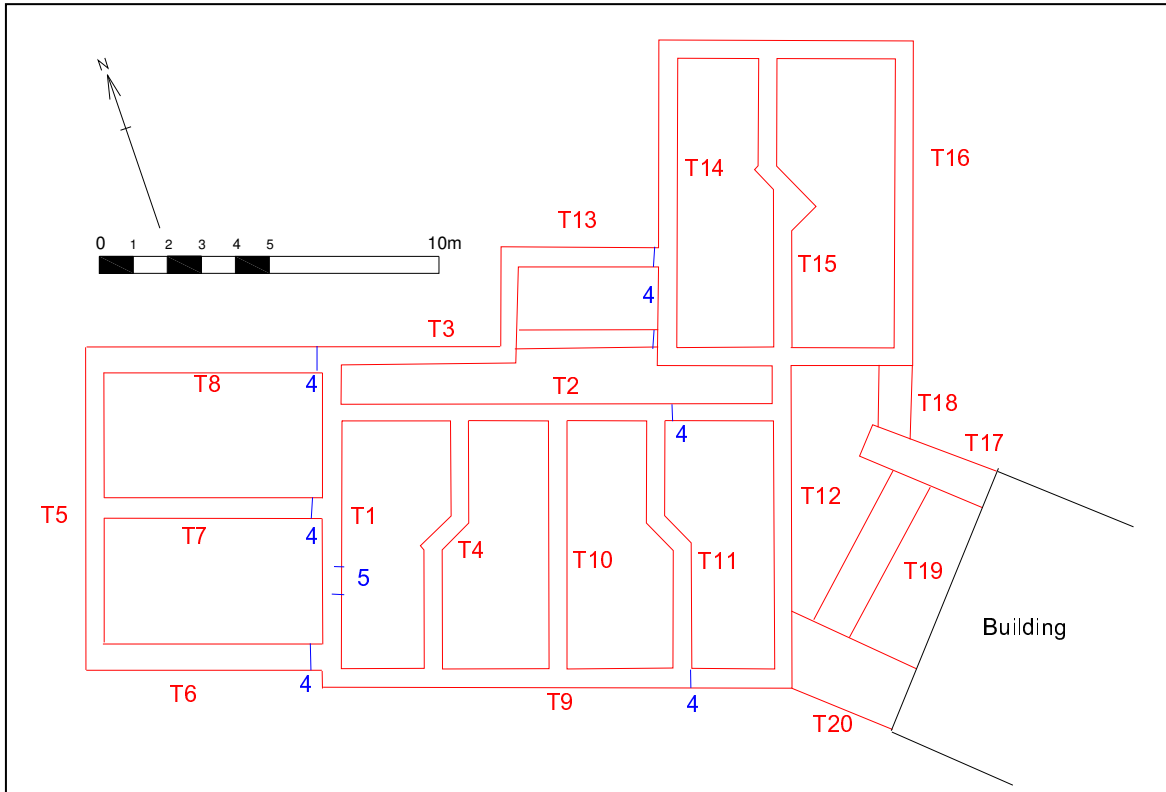


Figure 2: Trench plan

7.2. Natural, context 3

Natural clay 3 was situated 0.6m below the surface across the entire site. It was a silty clay, brownish yellow (10YR6/8) in colour and was at least 1.1m thick (fig 3).



Figure 3: North facing section, Trench 2 showing contexts 3 and 7

7.3. *Weathered natural, context 2*

Weathered natural 2 was situated 350mm from the surface in the west of the site. It was a silty clay, very pale brown (10YR7/4) and was 150mm thick (fig 4). It contained one fragment of burnt flint.



Figure 4: East facing section, Trench 5 showing contexts 1, 2, 3 and 4

7.4. Topsoil, context 1

Topsoil 1 was a very dark grey (10YR3/1), fine silty loam with almost no stones. It was situated in the west of the site and was 350mm thick (fig 4). It contained fragments of 19th century blue and white china, clay pipe stems, West Country slate, green glass, oyster, winkle and slipper limpets. None were retained.

7.5. Modern disturbance, contexts 4, 5, 6 and 7

Contexts 4, 5 and 6 were all associated with the building that previously stood on the site. Lens 4 was a very dark grey (10YR3/1) silty loam. It was 350mm thick and contained fragments of brick, china and concrete (fig 5).

Context 5 was the remains of a footing situated in the south west of the site. It was 0.9m wide and 0.18m deep. It was filled with a very dark grey (10YR3/1) silty loam, context 6. It contained fragments of brick and concrete (fig 5).

Modern overburden, context 7, was situated over the majority of the site. It was 200mm thick (fig 5).



Figure 5: West facing section Trench 1, showing contexts 5, 6 and 7

8. Conclusions

No archaeologically significant features were observed. Natural 3 was situated 0.6m below the surface and was at least 1.1m thick. Weathered natural 2 contained one fragment of burnt flint, which might point to prehistoric occupation in the area. The topsoil contained finds from the 19th century. Any other archaeology in the area may have been destroyed by the modern building that had previously stood on the site but enough of the site was observed to be fairly certain that there were no pits or other cut features present, and the main area of modern disturbance, contexts 4, 5 and 6, were all situated in the middle of the site.

Appendix 1. Context list

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

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

| Context | Above | Below | Description |
|----------------|---------------|--------------|--|
| 1 | 2 | | Top soil. Silty loam. 10YR3/1. sa0. Contained fragments of 19 th century china, west country slate, glass and oyster shell. |
| 2 | 3 | 1, 7 | Weathered natural. Silty clay. 10YR7/4. sa0. Contained one burnt flint. |
| 3 | | 2, 7 | Natural clay. Silty clay. 10YR6/8. sa0. |
| 4 | 3 | 7 | Soil lens. 10YR3/1. sa3. Contained fragments of brick and china. Disturbance from previous building. |
| 5 | 3 | 6 | Trenches for the previous building |
| 6 | 5 | 7 | Back fill of foundation trenches. Silty loam. 10YR3/1. sa3. Contained fragments of brick and concrete. |
| 7 | 2, 3, 4, 6 | | Modern overburden |

Bibliography

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

Whitehead 2004. Summary Report on an Archaeological Watching Brief at the Haskers Site, 101-115 Kingston Road, Portsmouth SAS 290.

Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief at 247 Fratton Road, Portsmouth. 2008