

**FORMER BRITISH GAS DEPOT, FORT FAREHAM
INDUSTRIAL ESTATE, FAREHAM, HAMPSHIRE
Archaeological Watching Brief**



Report No. 53134.1

November 2003

Former British Gas Depot, Fort Fareham Industrial Estate, Fareham, Hampshire

Archaeological Watching Brief, October–November 2003

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Appendix 1: Written Scheme of Investigation

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SUMMARY

Terrain Archaeology undertook a watching brief during the construction new industrial units on the east side of the interior of Fort Fareham at NGR SU57250490, during October–November 2003. Remnants of an extensive brick surface were exposed immediately overlying the natural clay. This is thought to be the remains of the original parade ground of the fort. It was overlain by an extensive layer of gravel, which may be a later parade ground surface.

No features pre-dating the fort were encountered.

INTRODUCTION

Ankers and Rawlings Developments Ltd commissioned Terrain Archaeology to undertake archaeological observations and recording during the development of new factory units on the eastern part of the parade ground of Fort Fareham, Fareham, Hampshire.

Fort Fareham is a Scheduled Monument (Hampshire SM No. 318). Scheduled Monument Consent was granted for the proposed development subject to a programme of archaeological observations and recording during the groundworks.

The new development is comprised of 10 factory units within three separate buildings on the eastern side of the former parade ground (Figure 2). The groundworks observed consisted of continuous strip foundations under the external walls and pad foundations under stanchions. Prior to construction, the ground was stabilised using vibro-stabilisation (i.e. the vibrating in of approximately 513 stone columns about 1.6 m each in length).

Fort Fareham lies on the southern edge of the town of Fareham, off Newgate Lane. It is on low-lying flat ground close to the upper reaches of Portsmouth Harbour, where the River Wallington flows into Fareham Lake (Figure 1). It lies about 3.25 km to the northwest of Fort Elson.

The site lies along the eastern side of the interior of Fort Fareham, within the Fort Fareham Industrial Estate (Figure 2). The topography is flat and lies about 18.3 m above Ordnance Datum. The site is curvilinear in shape about 140 m by 40 m across and is bounded by the road to the west and the earthen traverse at the rear of the Redan to the east. The site was formerly occupied by a large industrial unit and most of the surrounding area was tarmac.

The underlying geology is mapped as London Clay (Geological Survey of England and Wales 1-inch Sheet 316 *Fareham*, 1958).

The fieldwork was carried out between 27th October and 11th November 2003 by Peter Bellamy and Steven Tatler.

Terrain Archaeology would like to acknowledge the following for their help and cooperation during this project: Kelvin Rawlings (Ankers and Rawlings Development Ltd), Rob Perrin (English Heritage), David Hopkins (Hampshire County Council), and John Reilly Civil Engineers, the groundwork contractors.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Fort Fareham forms part of the extensive network of forts for the defence of Portsmouth. It was constructed between 1861 and 1864, the only one of a proposed line of three forts to be built between Fareham and Lee Farm, two miles in advance of the Gosport Advanced Lines from Fort Elson to Fort Gomer (Figure 1). It forms a link between this line of forts and those on Portsdown Hill to the northeast. It lies 2.5 km southwest of Fort Wallington.

The fort is a polygonal fort, roughly pentagonal in plan, surrounded by a moat, with a single entrance to the rear. The ramparts incorporate seven casemated gun galleries and casemated barracks, with caponiers projecting into the ditches at the angles and the rear of the fort was protected by a V-shaped redan. There was a central parade ground within the fort, which contained a number of buildings including a guard room, stables, sheds, workshops, and stores (Moore 1989 & 1993, Williams 1971). The casemates and other buildings were built largely of brick and concrete. Many of the bricks used in the construction were manufactured from the clay and brickearth excavated from the ditches surrounding the fort (Moore 1989).

The earliest 25-inch Ordnance Survey map showing the fort is dated 1932 (Hampshire sheet 75.9). This shows the area of the site as open space traversed by a footpath and a large rectangular standing on the northwest fringes of the site (Figure 4). A similar arrangement is shown on the 1940 25-inch Ordnance Survey map (Hampshire Sheet 75.9).

The fort became surplus to requirements in 1965 and was sold to Fareham Urban Council (Moore 1989). The 1971 Ordnance Survey 1:1250 map (Plan SU5704NW) shows that the area of the site was mixed trees and scrub at this date. The earlier footpath across it was still in existence.

The parade ground is now an industrial estate. The site was formerly a British Gas Depot and there was a single large rectangular building in the middle of the site (Figure 2).

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The objective of the archaeological observations was to establish and make available information about the archaeological resource existing on the site.

The archaeological works aimed to observe and record all the *in situ* archaeological deposits and features revealed during the groundworks to an appropriate professional standard.

METHODS

There was no written Brief issued for this work but a specification was produced by Terrain Archaeology (Appendix 1).

The work was carried out in accordance with the Institute of Field Archaeologists Code of Conduct and *Standard and guidance for archaeological watching briefs*.

The groundworks comprised continuous strip footings and for the three buildings, excavated using a mechanical excavator fitted with a toothed bucket. The depth of the footings trenches was determined by the contractors. The location of the footings trenches was taken from a plan provided by the client. All depths recorded were below existing ground surface.

The observations of the footings for the proposed new buildings was intermittent, as defined by the Institute of Field Archaeologists, with a suitably qualified archaeologist viewing all footings trenches after machining. All deposits exposed in the trenches were recorded using elements of Terrain Archaeology's recording system of complementary written, drawn and photographic records.

The records have been compiled in a stable, cross-referenced and fully indexed archive in accordance with current UKIC guidelines and the requirements of the receiving museum. The archive will be deposited with the Hampshire Museums Service.

RESULTS

Introduction

Prior to the start of the observations, the large rectangular building that formerly stood in the centre of the site was demolished and almost the entire tarmac surface surrounding the building was removed. The vibro-compaction work had been completed. The footings trenches for the three buildings were numbered Trench 1–3, from north to south (Figure 3).

Trench 1 was in the northern end of the site (Figure 3) and measured 12.5 m by 16.5 m across. The footings trenches were 0.5 m wide and between 0.2–0.4 m deep below the existing ground surface. The stanchion pits were 1.5 m square and 0.4 m deep.

Trench 2 was to the south of Trench 1 (Figure 3) and measured 24.5 m by 16.5 m across. The footings trenches were 0.5 m wide and between 0.2–0.4 m deep below the existing ground surface. The stanchion pits were 1.5 m square and 0.4 m deep.

Trench 3 was in the northern end of the site (Figure 3) and measured 66.5 m by 21.5 m across. The footings trenches were 0.5 m wide and between 0.2–0.4 m deep below the existing ground surface. The stanchion pits were 1.5 m square and 0.4 m deep.

Natural deposits

The top of the clean natural olive green clay (203, 306), with occasional flint gravel was exposed over most of the base of Trench 2 and in the northern half of Trench 3 at a depth of about 0.7 m below ground level. It was not exposed in Trench 1 or in the southern half of Trench 3 as these were not sufficiently deep.

Brick surface

Parts of an extensive brick paved surface (108, 202, 305) were exposed over much of the observed area. This surface was disturbed by the digging of the current foundation trenches and only a very small part appeared to be intact, not enough to be certain of the precise pattern in which the bricks were laid, though this appeared to be fairly irregular (Plate 3). In a number of areas, this surface consisted largely of crushed brick fragments and occasional whole bricks suggesting that it had been previously disturbed.

The extensive nature of this brick surface and its location immediately above the natural clay suggests that it is probably the remains of the original parade ground of Fort Fareham.

Overlying deposits

Over most of the area of the site, the brick surface was sealed by a layer of yellowish-brown to reddish-brown flint gravel and sand (107, 201, 304). This layer was between 0.1–0.2 m thick and was variable in nature across the site, being sandier in the north and more clayey sand to the south. The precise interpretation of this layer is unclear but it may be a replacement gravel parade ground surface. The dating of this is unclear.

This gravel surface was buried beneath a mixed series of layers of mixed grey and yellowish-brown clay with frequent flint gravel (106, 200, 303), with deposits of tarmac debris (105, 302), with an extensive layer of mixed orange and yellow sand and gravel (101, 206, 300) above, which formed the upper part of the stratigraphic sequence following the stripping of the site as part of the groundworks for the new development.

Along the eastern side of the site was a layer of dark grey to yellowish-brown clay loam (102, 301), with frequent flint gravel, some brick fragments and occasional charcoal flecks. This layer was heavily disturbed by tree roots and is probably a topsoil, perhaps representing the tail of the earth traverse behind the Redan, which lies immediately east of the site.

Disturbances

The general stratigraphic sequence described above was disturbed in a number of locations. These are described below from north to south.

In the northeast corner of Trench 1, part of a concrete base (110) was exposed at a depth of 0.4 m. This cut through brick surface 108. The structure to which this belonged has not been identified. Adjacent to this base was an area over eight metres across appears to have been disturbed and filled with a layer of reddish-grey clay (103) over 0.4 m thick. Two areas about 2.5 m across of dark brown loam with frequent wood fragments were found in the northern and southern ends of the trench (104, 109). These were probably areas of disturbance caused by the removal of tree stumps. The 1971 Ordnance Survey map shows that this area was covered in trees at that date.

Along the eastern side of Trench 2 were several vertical-sided features filled with very dark brown charcoal-rich loam (204) with quantities of modern pottery, tin plates, etc, which cut through the brick surface 203 and the overlying layers. These features are likely to be the remains of rubbish pits, perhaps relating the end of military use of the site. In the northeastern corner of were a number of similar features filled with very dark brown charcoal-rich clay loam (307) with large quantities of modern debris.

CONCLUSIONS

The observations revealed that the remains of an extensive brick parade ground surface still survive immediately above the natural clay across the area, albeit in a rather disturbed condition. Overlying this was another possible gravel parade ground surface.

No features dated earlier than the fort were observed.

PROJECT ARCHIVE

The archive (Terrain Archaeology Project No. 53134) will be deposited with Hampshire County Museums Service (Museum Accession No. A.2003.56), which has agreed to accept the archive, subject to fulfilment of the Museum's requirements of the preparation of archaeological archives. A copy of the microfilmed archive will be deposited with the National Monuments Record.

REFERENCES

- | | |
|-----------------------|---|
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| Moore, D., 1993 | 'Fort Fareham' Palmerston Forts Society Fortlog Portsmouth 14. |
| Williams, G. H., 1971 | 'Fort Fareham' <i>Fareham Past and Present</i> 14 , 2–4. |



Figure 1: Location Map

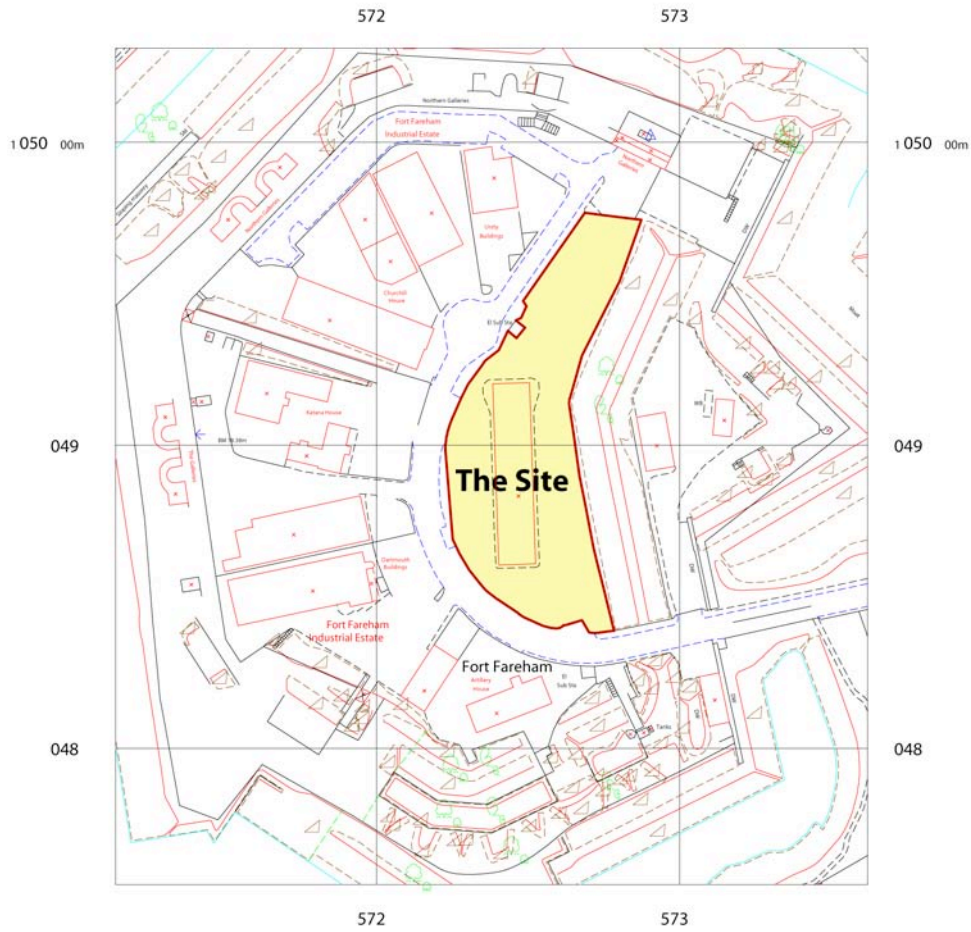


Figure 2: Site Location map
(Reproduced from Ordnance Survey Superplan Data Drawing No. 00005368, © Crown Copyright 2003 All Rights reserved)

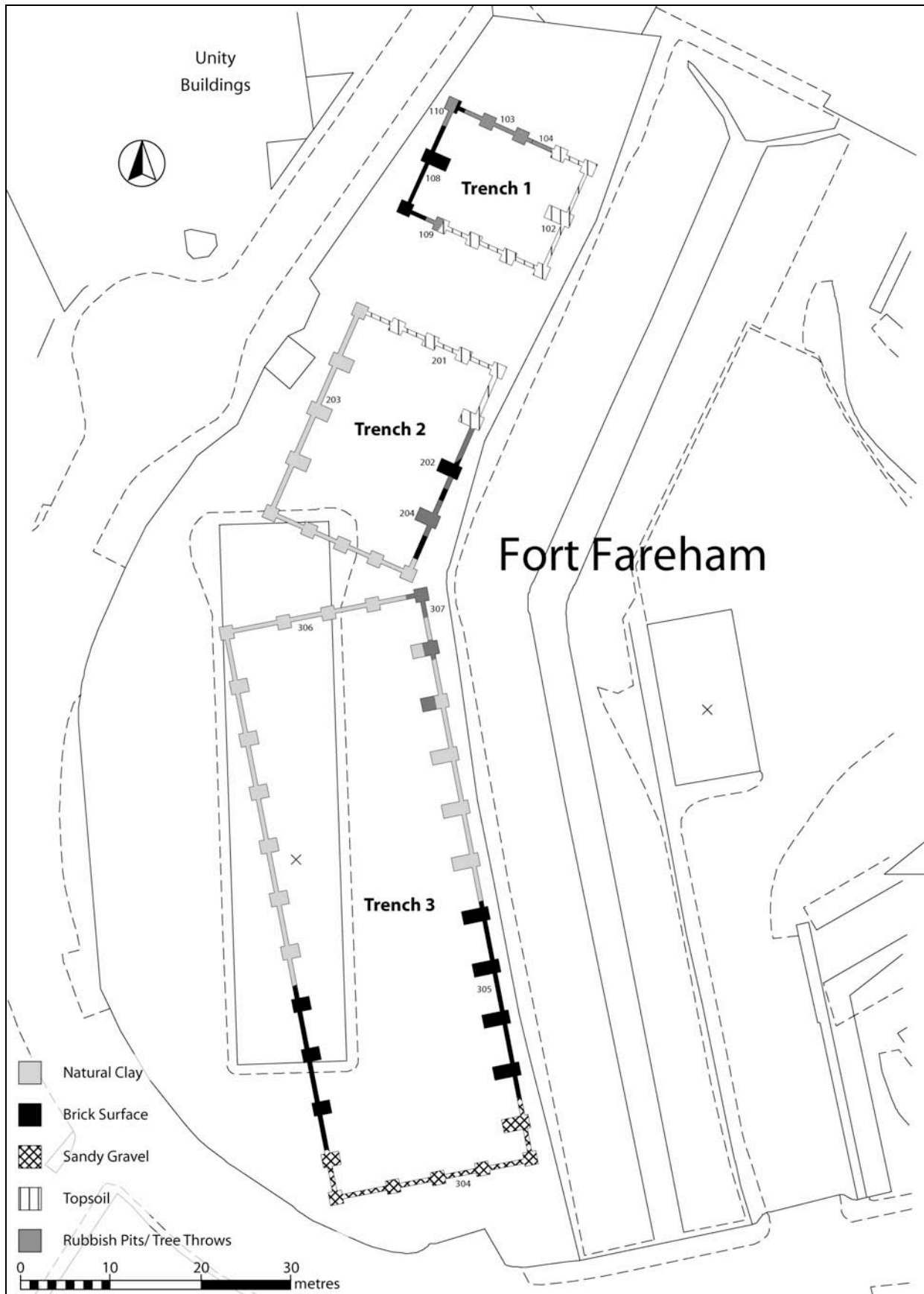


Figure 3: Plan of observed trenches

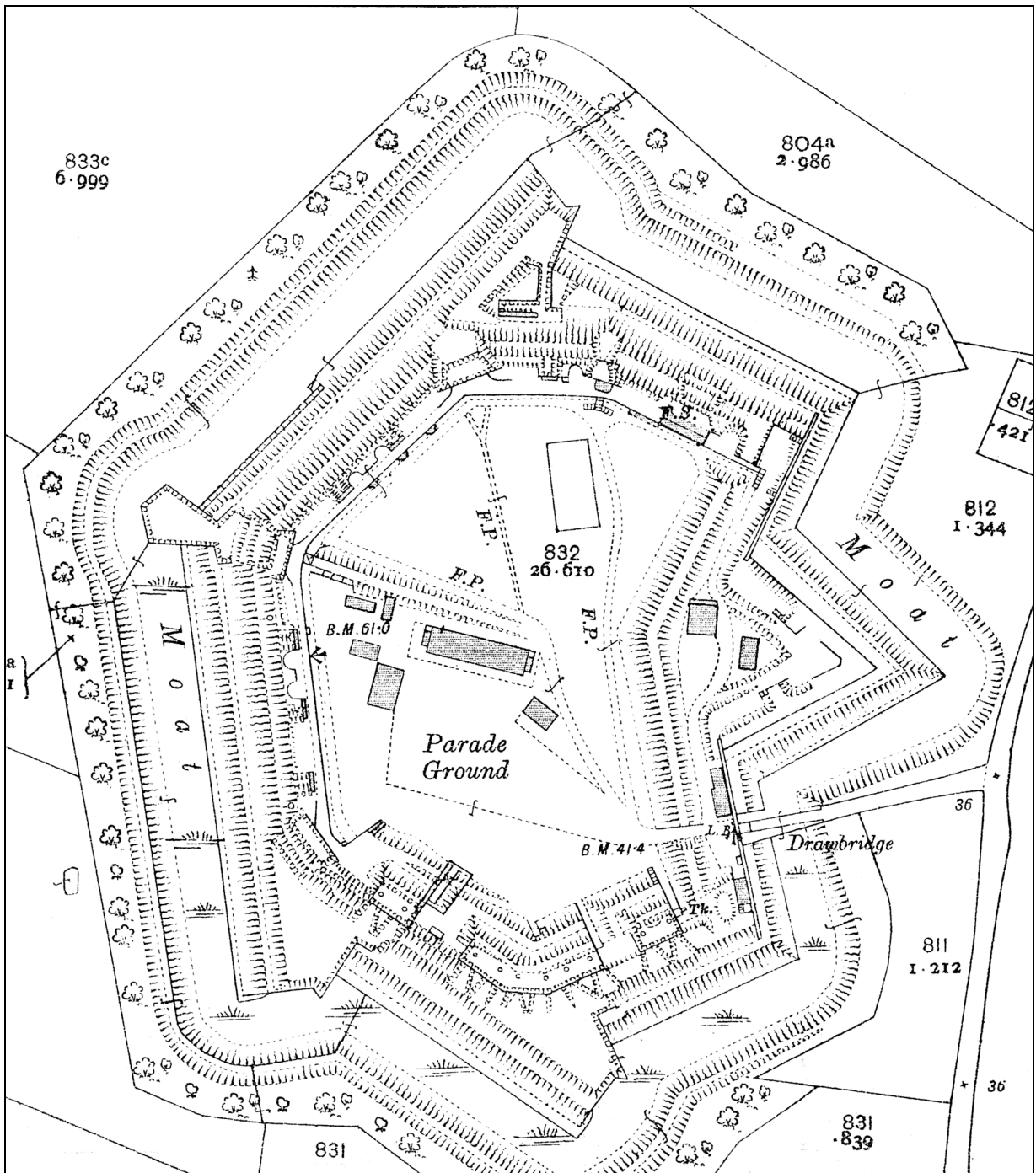


Figure 4: Extract from 1932 Ordnance Survey 25-inch map (© Crown Copyright Reserved)



Plate 1: General view of Trench 1 from north.



Plate 2: Deposits on western side of Trench 1 with brick surface 108 at the base.

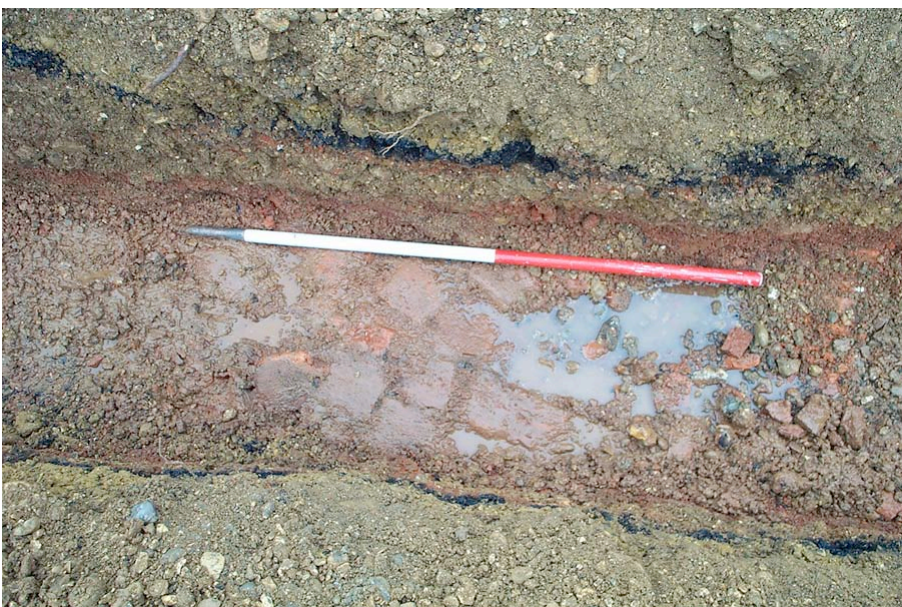


Plate 3: Detail of brick surface 108 in western side of Trench 1.



Plate 4: Eastern side of Trench 2, looking south.



Plate 5: Detail of east side of Trench 2.



Plate 6: West side of Trench 3, looking north.



Plate 7: East side of Trench 3, looking north.



Plate 8: Detail of section on east side of Trench 3.

APPENDIX 1: WRITTEN SCHEME OF INVESTIGATION