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Southampton Archaeology Unit

Report 798

Archaeological watching brief at 31 – 33 Broad Street, Old Portsmouth, 2006/1756

By PR Cottrell

2006

Client: G & D Lloyd



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Cover photo: the site prior to redevelopment.

(Photograph provided by G Lloyd)

Report on the archaeological watching brief at 31 – 33 Broad Street, Old Portsmouth, 2006/1756.

By PR Cottrell BA

Site code & Portsmouth Museum accession number	2006/1756
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1. Summary.

A watching brief on the groundworks for the construction of two terraced houses revealed early modern brick foundations, a deposit of animal bones and two stone features, possibly part of the foundations of an earlier structure.

2. Introduction

The Archaeology Unit of Southampton City Council carried out an archaeological watching brief at 31 – 33 Broad Street, Old Portsmouth (fig 1) on behalf of G and D Lloyd. The observations were made by A Moss between 27/11/2006 and 1/12/2006. The project was managed by P Cottrell. The pottery was scanned by Dr AD Russel MIFA , and the clay tobacco pipe was scanned by P Cottrell.

The site is within Local Area of Archaeological Importance 1. Area 1 covers the area of the “old town” of Portsmouth and its defences. The area is defined principally as one of importance for medieval and post-medieval archaeology.

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.



Figure 1. Location of the site.

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Figure 2. The Point, showing the site location.

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4. Watching brief methodology.

The methodology followed that specified in the Scheme of Investigation. The archaeological work on site consisted of observation of the machine excavation of the foundation trenches.

All archaeological records were made using the Southampton City Council archaeological recording system (SMART system). The archive is stored on Southampton City Council premises.

5. Site location and topography.

The site is in the Point area of Old Portsmouth, on the west side of Broad Street at the south side of its junction with Bathing Lane (fig 2).

The surface geology at the site is shingle and made ground overlying solid deposits of the Bracklesham Beds (British Geological Survey, 1994). The modern ground surface is at about 2.5m OD.

6. Historical and archaeological background.

The harbour town of Portsmouth at the south-west corner of Portsea Island was in existence by the late 12th century and received a charter from Richard I in 1194. It developed into an important port for trade with Europe. During The Hundred Years War it was raided and burnt by the French in 1338 and 1369. The adoption of Portsmouth by Henry VII as a base for the building and repair of the king's ships and the threat of war with France led to expansion of the town from the late 15th century.

The area known as The Point has been used for housing since the Tudor period. A plan of the town made in the reign of Elizabeth I, probably made in 1584 (Redstone *et al*, 1911), shows two houses and two lime kilns close to the Round Tower. The street pattern was established and the area largely built over by the later 17th century. This block appears on early maps of Portsmouth including those by De Gomme (1668), Lempriere (1716) and Desmaretz (c1750).

Prior to the Second World War the site was occupied by retail and residential premises which were destroyed by enemy action. The plot has been vacant for about 60 years, and was latterly used for boat storage.

7. Results of the watching brief.

The foundation trenches were excavated in three stages, recorded as trenches 1 to 3 (fig 3).

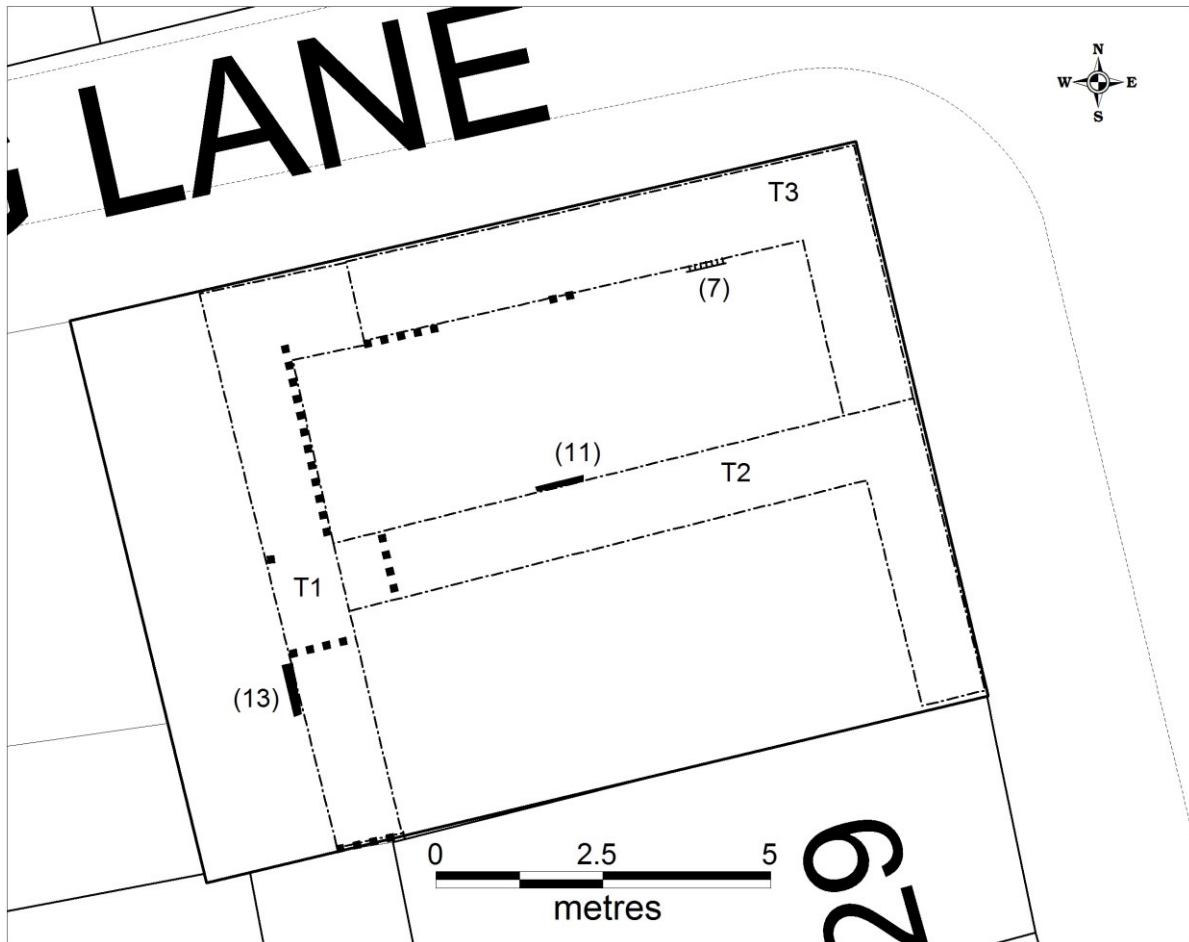


Figure 3. Plan of site showing location of context 7 and brick foundations exposed.

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Context 1, at the west side of the site in trench 1, was a concrete slab 100mm thick, laid on context 2, c80mm of gravel. Below this was a dark greyish brown soil, context 3, up to 250mm thick and containing common brick fragments. This formed the surface layer over most of the site. Below it was context 4, a layer of flint gravel, 600mm thick, probably redeposited natural shingle. This overlaid context 5, a deposit

of mixed dark soils that occurred over the whole site and contained lenses of gravel, brick rubble, 19th century pottery, clay tobacco pipes dating from the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries, and modern debris. This was numbered 6 in trench 2.

The remains of the brick foundations of the buildings that formerly occupied the site were exposed in all three trenches. The size of the bricks and the type of lime mortar suggest an early modern date.

Context 7 was a deposit of grey sandy loam 600mm wide and 200mm thick observed in the south side of trench 3. It appeared to be the fill of a shallow feature, 9, and was overlaid by context 5. A quantity of animal bones came from this context. One was sawn and these may have been butchery waste, probably associated with occupation of the site prior to the construction of the early modern brick building.

Two stone features were exposed. Context 11, exposed in the north side of trench 2, was c700mm wide and consisted of limestone rubble blocks and a large beach pebble, bonded with what appeared to be lime mortar (fig 4).



Figure 4. Context 11 in Trench 2.

Context 13, in the west side of trench1, was c800mm wide and comprised limestone rubble blocks with no obvious bonding and a few red bricks laid on top (fig 5). Both stone features were overlaid by context 5.

The earliest deposit exposed, below layer 5, was the natural shingle, context 10.



Figure 5. Context 13 in trench 1.

8. Conclusions.

The two stone features, 11 and 13, may represent the foundations of a structure that occupied the site prior to the early modern brick building. There was no dating evidence relating to them, but context 11 predated context 5. Context 7, which contained probable butchery waste, also predated context 5. Context 5 contained finds of post-medieval and early modern date and appears to have comprised mixed soils or disturbed deposits, probably associated with the construction and occupation of the early modern properties on the site.

Bibliography.

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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	Type	Description
1	layer	concrete
2	layer	gravel
3	layer	10YR 3/1 soil with brick fragments, sa3
4	layer	gravel
5	layer	10YR 3/1 soil with brick rubble, sa3
6	layer	same as 5
7	fill	10YR 5/1 sandy loam, sa0
8	unstratified	unstratified finds
9	feature	possible shallow feature
10	layer	natural shingle
11	fill	stone feature, possible foundation
12	feature	cut for 11
13	fill	stone feature, possible foundation
14	feature	cut for 13

Appendix 2. Finds list.

Context no	Mat Type	Find Type	Wgt (gm)	No of frag	Description
5	PCLY	TPIP	2	1	Stem frag, bore suggests late 18thC-early 19thC
5	PCLY	TPIP	1	1	Stem frag, bore suggests mid-late 18thC
5	PCLY	TPIP	5	1	Stem frag, bore suggests late 18thC-early 19thC. Marked H.LEIGH PORTCHESTER
5	PCLY	TPIP	8	1	Stem frag, bore suggests early-mid 17thC
5	PCLY	TPIP	6	1	Bowl frag, remnant of applied decoration
5	PCLY	TPIP	9	1	Part bowl with part stem, bore suggests mid-late 18thC. Spur foot marked I C.
5	PCLY	TPIP	19	1	Bowl with part stem, bore suggests mid-late 17thC or early 18thC
7	BONE	MAMM	149	5	Fragments, 1 sawn
7	IRON	NAIL	19	1	Rectangular section nail with wood remnants adhering
7	BONE	BIRD	2	1	fragment
8	CRMC	BRIC	1368	1	Brick, half, red, remnants of lime mortar, cement render on 1 face
8	POT	LAMP	35	1	Oil lamp reservoir. Flattened globular form, missing pedestal foot, hole in top, embossed & blue transfer printed.