Southampton Archaeology Unit

Report: 937

Archaeological watching brief at the northern end of Fratton Road, Portsmouth. 2009/52

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2009

Client: Portsmouth City Council

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Archaeology Unit report	937
Ordnance Survey grid reference	465,125.8 100,819.1
Accession number	2009/52

1. Summary

The Archaeology Unit of Southampton City Council carried out an archaeological watching brief on a gas trench at the northern end of Fratton Road, Portsmouth on behalf of Portsmouth City Council.

The natural was observed between 0.60m and 0.85m below the surface along the entire trench.

A gravel road surface, context 9, shows where Church Road once met Fratton Road suggesting that Church Road extended further east and that the west edge of Fratton Road was located further east.

A series of brick and limestone footings were observed along the length of the trench and were the remains of tenements along Fratton Road. The footings run at a different angle to the modern day Fratton Road suggesting that the road ran more northeast-southwest and was further east than its present position.

One pit was observed, it contained several cow metacarpals and metatarsals, fragments of brick, a fragment of 18/19th century Verwood pottery and fragments of 19th century glass.

No archaeology was observed from a point slightly beyond the northern driveway to the vicarage and just before number 247 Fratton Road.

2. Introduction

The Archaeology Unit of Southampton City Council carried out an archaeological watching brief on a gas trench at the northern end of Fratton Road, Portsmouth on behalf of Portsmouth City Council (fig 1). The observations were made by Dr A Russel BA PhD MIFA and E L McDonald BA MA between the 4/2/09 and the 12/2/09. The project was managed by Dr A Russel BA PhD MIFA.

3. Aims of the investigation

The aim of the investigation was to make a rapid record of any archaeology revealed along the pipe trench.

4. Watching brief methodology

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 Archaeology Unit of Southampton City Council observed the mechanical excavation of a gas trench in the northern end of Fratton Road, between Church Road and St Mary's 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.

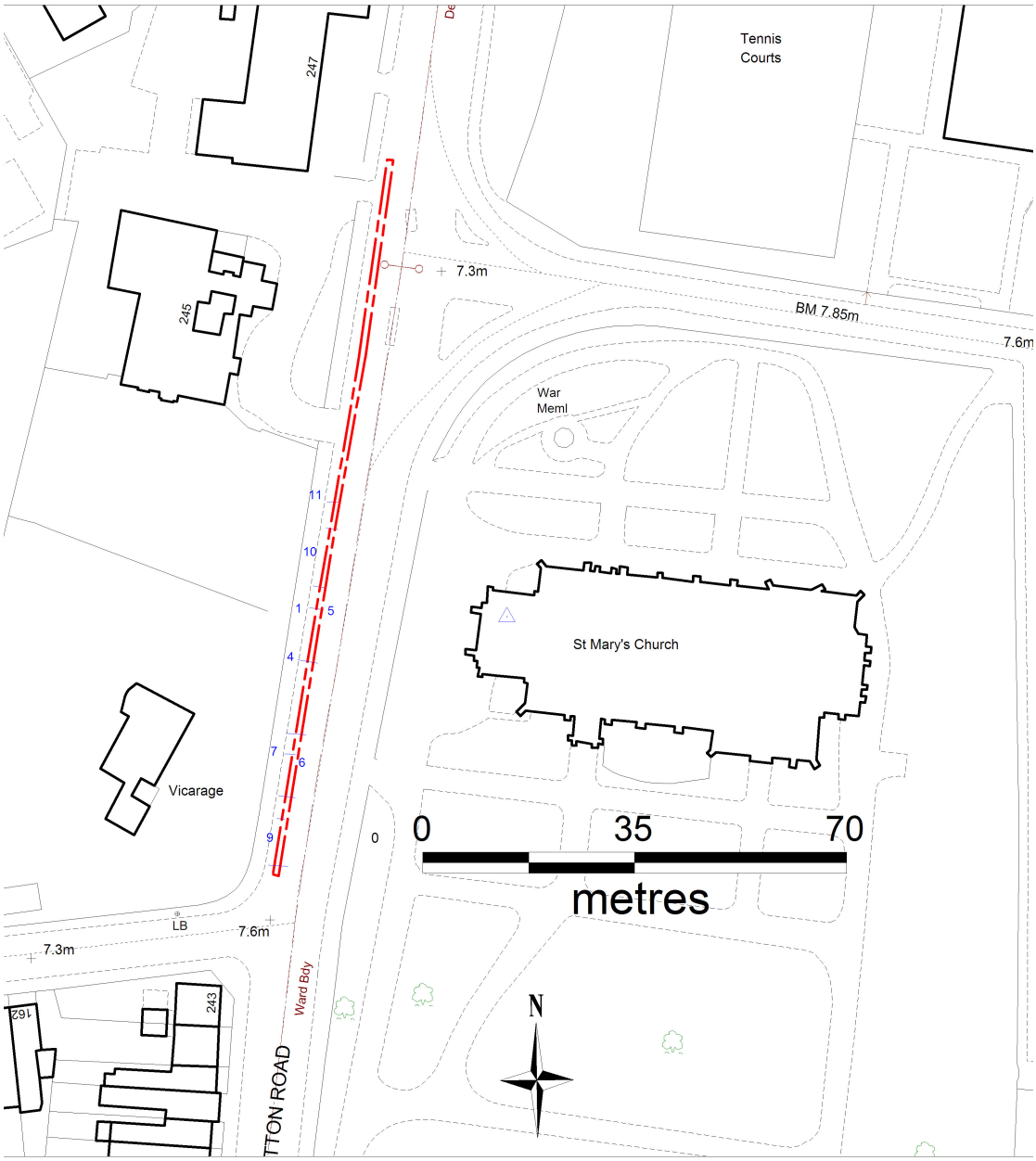

Figure 1: Site location

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

personal name 'Froda'. 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 between the vicarage and the site of the medieval church as shown in Edwards map of 1716 (fig 2).

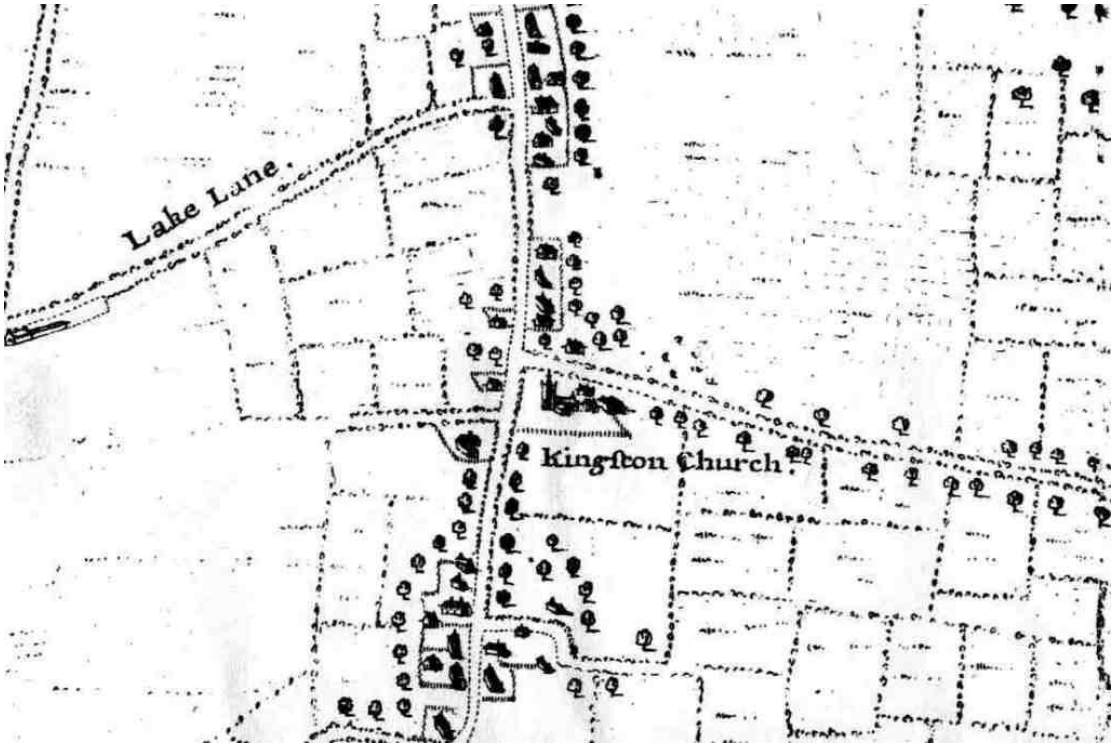

Figure 2: Edwards map of 1716

7. Results of the watching brief

7.1. Introduction

The Archaeology Unit of Southampton City Council observed the mechanical excavation of a gas trench in the Northern end of Fratton Road. The trench was 70m long, 0.70m wide and 1.10m deep (fig 3).

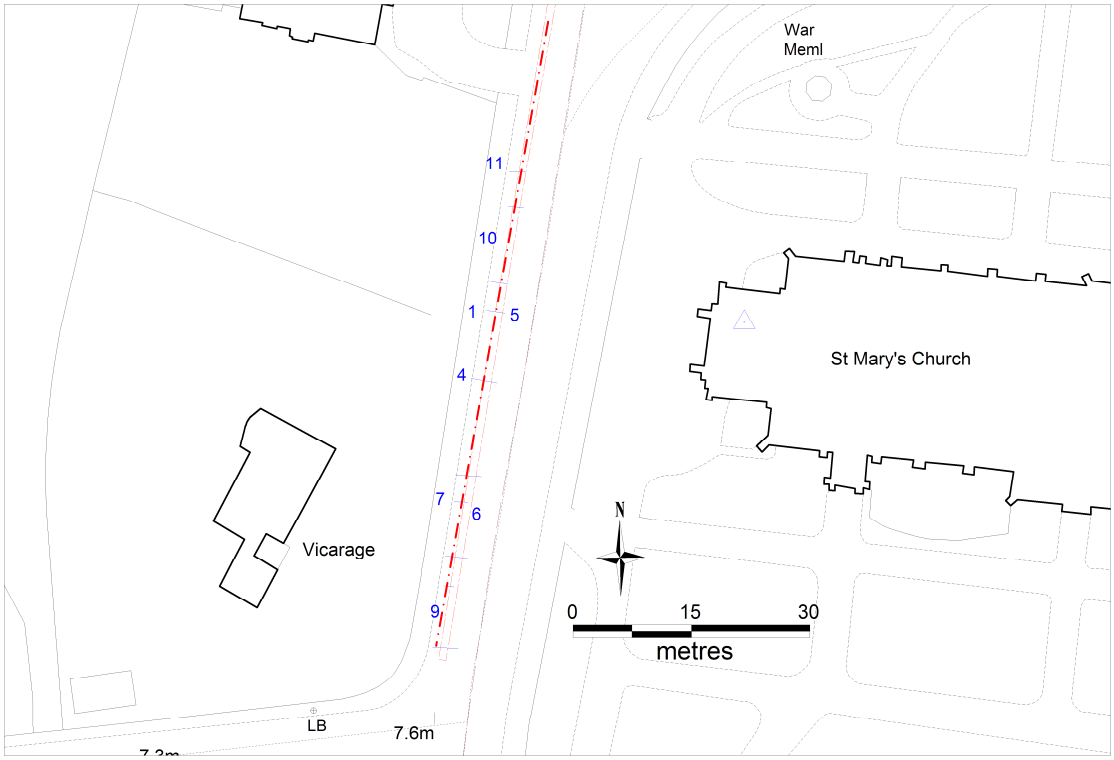

Figure 3: Location of features

7.2. Natural. Context 12

Natural 12 was situated between 0.60m and 0.85m below the surface and was at least 500mm thick (fig 5). It was a brownish yellow (10YR 6/6) clay loam in the southern end of the trench, and changed to an olive brown (2.5YR5/4) in the north of the trench. It was the weathered upper surface of the London Clay.

7.3. Features. Contexts 1, 2, 7, 8 and 9

Pit 1 was situated in the east facing section opposite the entrance to St Mary's Church. It was 900mm long, 490mm deep and had a rounded base. It was filled with a greyish brown (10YR5/2) clay loam, context 2. It contained several cow metacarpals and metatarsals, fragments of brick, a fragment of 18/19th century Verwood pottery and fragments of 19th century glass (fig 4).

Figure 4: East facing section showing pit 1

Gravel road surface 9 was situated to the south of Church Road and arched into Fratton Road. It was light brownish grey (10YR 6/2) gravel with a sandy clay loam matrix. It was 300mm thick and was 250mm below the modern road surface (fig 5). Feature 7 was later seen to be part of the road and could have been a wheel rut. It was 700mm long and 300mm deep with a rounded base. It was filled with a large amount of slate in a greyish brown (10YR5/2) clay loam soil, context 8 (fig 6).

Figure 5: West facing section showing road 9 above the London Clay 12

Figure 6: West facing section showing road 9 and wheel rut 7 and 8

7.4. Walls. Contexts 3, 4, 5, 6, 10, 11

A series of brick and limestone footings were observed along the length of the trench and were the remains of structures along Fratton Road. The footings run at a different angle to the modern day Fratton Road suggesting that the

road ran more northeast-southwest and was further east than its present position.

Footing 3 was situated between wall 4 and 5. It was at least 3m long and was 400mm deep. It was made of bricks in a mortar matrix. The bricks were 108mm wide and 64mm thick. They had no frogs. The coursing was English garden wall bond (fig 7).

Figure 7: Wall 3

Wall 4 was situated 7.8m south of wall 3. It ran east-west across the trench, was 500mm wide and 400mm deep. It was made up of large limestone blocks and flint nodules (fig 8).

Figure 8: West facing section showing wall 4

Wall 5 was situated near the middle of the trench opposite the church, in the west-facing section. It was built of brick above a limestone footing. The bricks were 225mm long, 103mm wide and 64mm thick. The variegated red and white clay suggests they were made with clay from the Reading Beds.

Wall 6 ran roughly north-south and was situated in the south of the trench. It was made of bricks and mortar. The bricks had no frogs and were 225mm long, 103mm wide and 64mm thick.

Wall 10 was situated in the north part of the trench. It ran roughly north-south for 5m. It was a brick and mortar wall on a chalk raft. The bricks were 108mm wide and 64mm thick. They had been made of brickearth and had no frogs (fig 9).

Figure 9: West facing section showing wall 10

Wall 11 was situated in the north of the trench. It was thicker than the other walls and may have been a chimney base. It was made of bricks and mortar. The bricks were 230mm long, 108mm wide and 64mm thick and had no frogs.

7.5. Modern layers. Contexts 13 and 14

Layer 13 was a light grey (10YR7/2) sandy loam situated 400mm below the surface. It was between 50-100mm thick and contained a large amount of mortar.

Layer 14 was a greyish brown (10YR5/2) sandy clay loam. It contained a large amount of brick rubble and may have been used to create a level surface for the modern road. It was 200mm thick and was situated 200mm below the surface.

Both layers may be the remains of the structures whose foundations survived.

8. Conclusions

The natural was observed between 0.60m and 0.85m below the surface along the enter trench.

A gravel road surface, context 9, shows where Church Road once met Fratton Road suggesting that Church Road extended further east and that Fratton Road was located further east.

A series of brick and limestone footings were observed along the length of the trench and were the remains of tenements along Fratton Road. The footings run at a different angle to the modern day Fratton Road suggesting that the road ran more northeast-southwest and was further east than its present position. Edwards map of 1716 does not show any of these structures suggesting that they are older than the vicarage on the west side of Fratton Road.

One pit was observed, it contained several cow metacarpals and metatarsals, fragments of brick, a fragment of 18/19th century Verwood pottery and fragments of 19th century glass.

The archaeology stops soon after the northern drive way to the vicarage, just before number 247 Fratton Road.

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	12	2	Pit
2	1	Modern road	Fill of pit. Clay loam. 10YR5/2. sa.4. Contained cow bones, fragments of brick, a fragment of 18/19th century verwood pottery and fragments of 19th century glass
3	12	Modern road	Brick wall
4	12	Modern road	Limestone and flint wall
5	12	Modern road	Brick wall on limestone footings
6	12	Modern road	Brick wall
7	12	8	Wheel rut
8	7	Modern road	Fill of wheel rut. Clay loam. 10YR5/2. sa.3. Contained slate
9	12	Modern road	Gravel road. Sandy clay loam. 10YR6/2. sa.4.
10	12	Modern road	Brick wall on a raft of chalk
11	12	Modern road	Brick chimney base
12		9	Natural. Clay loam. 10YR6/6 and 2.5Y5/4. sa2.
13	9	14	Mortar layer. Sandy loam. 10YR7/2. sa.3
14	13	Modern road	Brick rubble. Sandy clay loam. 10YR5/2. sa.4

Bibliography

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

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

Russel A and McDonald E. 2009. Archaeological watching brief at 247 Fratton Road, Portsmouth. 2008 / 158

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