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## Southampton Archaeology Unit

### Report on the Archaeological Watching Brief at Green Ash, Lower Sandy Down, Boldre, New Forest National Park.

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2013  
Report 1144  
Client: John Dodwell



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# **Report on the Archaeological Watching Brief at Green Ash, Lower Sandy Down, Boldre, New Forest National Park.**

By EL Anderson BA MA AlfA AD Russel BA PhD MlfA

Site code	A2013.28
Archaeology Unit report	1144
Ordnance Survey grid reference	NGR SZ 308994
Planning application number	12/97410
Accession Number	A2013.28

## **1. Executive Summary**

The Archaeology Unit of Southampton City Council carried out an archaeological watching brief on the ground works for an extension of an 18<sup>th</sup> century cottage at Green Ash, Lower Sandy Down, Boldre, New Forest National Park on behalf of John Dodwell. The Victorian extensions and part of the original 18<sup>th</sup> century thatched cottage were removed to make way for the extension. Most of the features revealed by the groundworks were of 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century date but one post-hole contained a fragment of burnt flint, a worked flint flake and a fragment of 17<sup>th</sup> century pottery and was probably prehistoric in date.

A record of the standing buildings was made separately by the developer.

## **2. Introduction**

2.1 The Archaeology Unit of Southampton City Council carried out an archaeological watching brief on the ground works at Green Ash, Lower Sandy Down, Boldre, New Forest National Park on behalf of Mr John Dodwell. The observations were carried out by A Fedorowicz and EL Anderson BA MA AlfA between the 08/07/2013 and the 25/07/2013. The project was managed by Dr A Russel MlfA, M Garner BA MlfA identified the worked flint and Dr A Russel MlfA identified the other finds recovered from the site.

## **3. Acknowledgements**

Thanks are due to Mr John Dodwell for commissioning the work and for his assistance in providing site access. Thanks are also due to Frank Green of the New Forest National Park Authority for his assistance with the project.

## **4. Aims of the investigation**

4.1 The aims of the investigation as defined in the written scheme of investigation were *'to determine the presence or absence of archaeological features, structures, deposits, artefacts or ecofacts within the area of the groundworks, and to record such evidence.'* (SCCAU 2013).

## 5. Methodology

5.1 The watching brief was kept on the groundworks for an extension and on the partial removal of an existing 18<sup>th</sup> century and Victorian building. The groundworks were carried out by mechanical excavator under archaeological supervision, after which the sections were cleaned and recorded. All archaeological records were made using the Southampton City Council archaeological recording system. The colours of deposits were recorded using the Munsell Soil Color Chart and these are used in this report (Munsell Color 1975).

## 6. Site location and geology

The site lies to the east of the A337 and west of St John the Baptist church, Boldre, at NGR SZ 308994 (fig 1). The underlying geology consists of the clays and sands of the Osborne and Headon Beds (British Geological Survey, Lymington, Sheet 330, 1974). The site lies at the top of a steep valley, sloping down to a tributary of the Lymington River. The valley has removed the Plateau Gravel that covers the un-eroded parts of the Forest. The north of the site lies at 29.84mOD.

## 7. Historical and archaeological background

7.1 The site lies within the parish of Boldre (fig 1). The historic parish is large and contains a number of smaller settlements. The site does not lie within the historic village centre, but in an area of scattered settlement called Sandy Down, which lies close to the historic manor of Battramsley. This had its origin in the Saxon period but by the 17<sup>th</sup> century the estate had been split into a number of small holdings (VCH p617).

7.2 The Hampshire County Council Archaeology and Historic Buildings Record has details of six historic assets within 1km of the site. These are:

Site Ref	Grid ref	Details
21825	SU303996	Post-medieval field system at Coxhill Lodge
21827	SU302992	Disc Barrow on Race Plain
21881	SU304994	Ovate ?handaxe from Setley Plain
51619	SU314988	Boldre Grange, by Sir Richard Norman Shaw 1875
57683	SU314990	Octagonal garden structure possibly part of Boldre Grange landscape
62980	SU301998	WWII German work camp

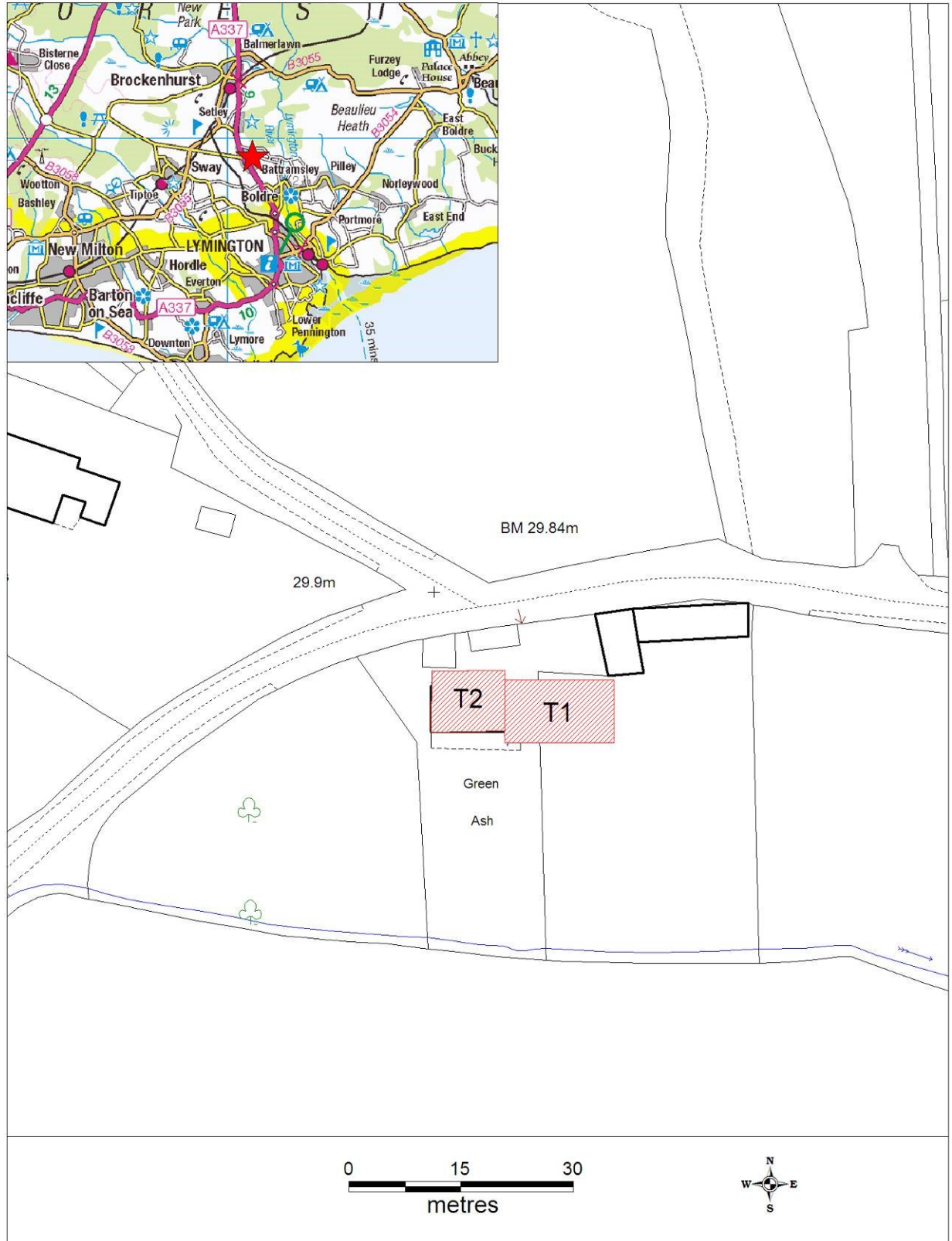


Figure 1: Site location, site marked by a star, trenches 1 and 2 shown in red

## 8. Results of the excavation

### 8.1. Introduction

The Victorian extensions and part of the original 18<sup>th</sup> century thatched cottage were removed to make way for the extension. A total of two trenches were dug (fig 1 and 2). Trench 1 was to the east of the 18<sup>th</sup> century cottage after the demolition of the Victorian extension and was dug for the foundations of the new extension. It was 15m long, 8.5m wide and ranged from 0.5m to 1.7m deep; the majority of this trench was excavated before the archaeological contractor was informed of the groundworks. Trench 2 was situated within what remained of the 18<sup>th</sup> century thatched cottage. It was dug to remove the concrete floor within the building and for a level reduction to the north of the building. It was 10m long, 8m wide and ranged from 0.3m deep in the south and 0.6m deep in the north.



**Figure 2: Trench location, trenches 1 and 2 shown in red, and features in blue**

### 8.2. Natural

Natural sand and clay, 4, was situated 1.8 – 1.9m below the surface and was at least 0.2m thick (figs 3 & 7). It was mostly light grey (10YR 7/1) sand with patches of pinkish grey (5YR6/2) clay.



**Figure 3: South facing section showing layers 2 and 3**

Above 4 was natural clay 3, some 0.2-0.5m below the surface. It was observed in both trenches 1 and 2 (figs 3 and 7). It was a yellow (10YR7/8) silty clay and was 1.85m thick.

### *8.3. Prehistoric*

Posthole 15 was situated in trench 2 near the east end (figs 2, 4, and 5). It was 350mm long, 340mm wide and 150mm deep. The sides sloped gradually and the base was concave. It was filled with a light brownish grey (10YR6/2) sandy clay loam containing some charcoal and burnt flints, context 16. One fragment of burnt flint, one worked flint flake and one fragment of abraded 17<sup>th</sup> century Verwood pottery was recovered.



Figure 4: East facing section of posthole 15

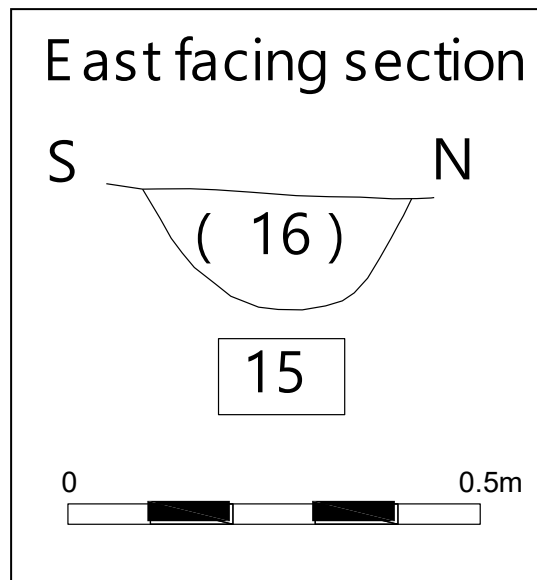


Figure 5: East facing section posthole 15

#### 8.4. Early modern features.

Feature 10 was a construction trench for the southern wall of the 18<sup>th</sup> century cottage (figs 2 and 5). It ran east-west and was 6.5m long at least 1m wide and 0.2m deep.



The sides sloped gradually and the base appeared flat. It was filled with the foundation of the 18<sup>th</sup> century cottage, context 12. The bricks were 204mm by 110mm by 62mm. The trench had then been backfilled with context 11, a dark greyish brown (10YR4/2), silty clay loam. It contained a fragment of 19<sup>th</sup> century Welsh slate, one fragment of 19<sup>th</sup> / 20<sup>th</sup> century glass and a fragment of 19<sup>th</sup> / 20<sup>th</sup> century china.



**Figure 5: East facing section of construction trench 10**

Feature 6 was observed in the southwest corner of trench 1, and could have been associated with the Victorian extension in this area (figs 2, 6 and 7). Its full extent was not observed but it was at least 0.9m long, 0.15m wide and 0.65m deep. The sides were steep and it had a flat base. It was filled with a very mixed silty clay loam, context 7. The fill was badly disturbed when the foundations were removed, but it contained Victorian bricks 225mm by 106mm by 66mm. The bricks were handmade and did not have frogs.



Figure 6: North facing section of 6

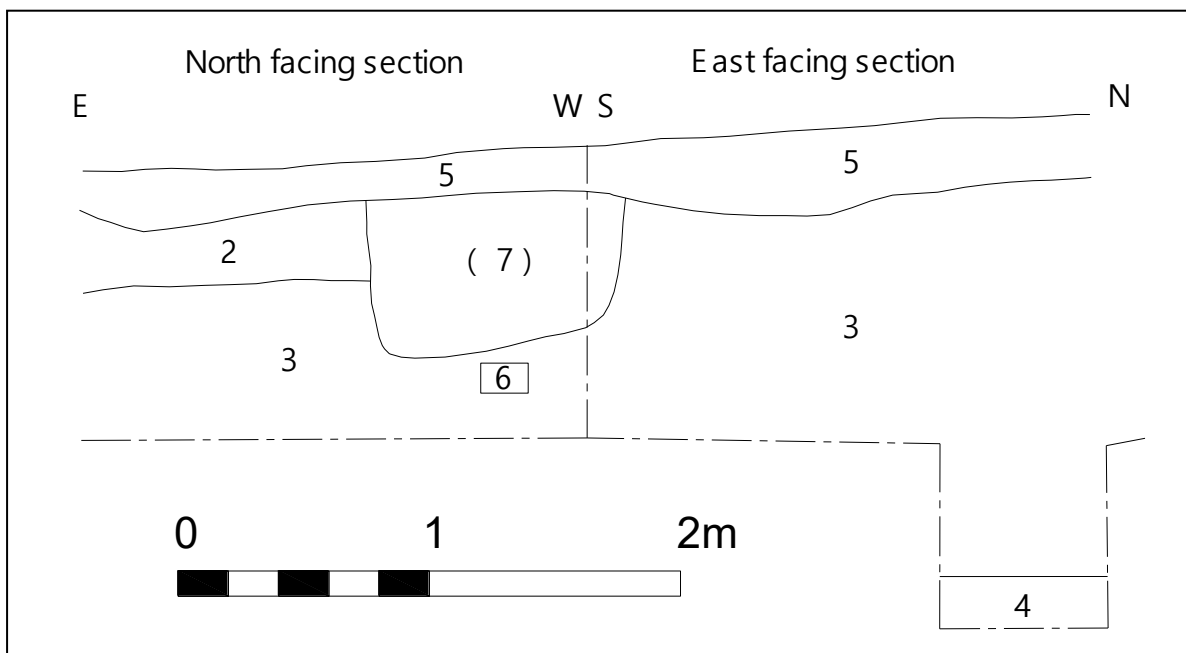


Figure 7: North and east facing sections showing 6 and layers 2-5

Land drain 13 was situated in the northwest section of trench 2. It was 0.3m wide, 0.6m deep and was at least 0.8m long (fig 8). The sides were near vertical and the base was concave. It was filled with a dark greyish brown (10YR4/2) silty clay loam with abundant brick fragments and flint cobbles, context 14. One fragment of 19<sup>th</sup> / 20<sup>th</sup> tile was recovered from this context.



**Figure 8: East facing section of drain 13**

Land drain 17 ran roughly southeast-northwest across the northern end of trench 2 (figs 2 and 9). It was 0.3m wide, 0.4m deep and at least 3m long, with near vertical sides. It was filled with a dark greyish brown (10YR5/2) silty clay loam, containing large amounts of flint cobbles, context 18. Fragments of 19<sup>th</sup> / 20<sup>th</sup> century glass was observed but not retained from this feature.



**Figure 9: Drain 17**

#### *8.5. Early modern and modern layers.*

Layer 2 was observed 0.4m below the surface in the southeast corner of trench 2 (figs 6 and 7). It was a very dark greyish brown (10YR3/2) silty clay loam, 0.32m thick. A number of artifacts were recovered from the spoil heap, and probably came from this deposit. They consisted of a fragment of 19th / 20th century welsh slate, a fragment of brick and a fragment of earthenware sewer pipe.

Soil and rubble layer 9 was situated below the floor of the cottage in trench 2. It was a dark greyish brown (10YR4/2) silty clay loam some 100mm thick. It contained large amounts of brick rubble.

Concrete floor 8 was situated within the 18<sup>th</sup> century cottage in trench 2. It was 200mm thick and had a sheet of plastic at its base.

Top soil 1 was situated over the majority of trench 1 and in the north end of trench 2. It was a dark greyish brown (10YR4/2) silty clay loam, some 0.18m thick. It contained fragments of modern brick.

Demolition layer 5 was situated over the majority of trench 1 and was the demolition material left over from the recent removal of the Victorian foundation. It was 0.1-0.5m thick and contained abundant brick fragments.

## **9. Conclusions**

The natural consisted of sand and clay. Posthole 15, beneath the floor of the 18<sup>th</sup> century cottage, was probably prehistoric in date, as it contained burnt flints and a struck flint flake. The fragment of 17<sup>th</sup> century pottery that was also recovered was probably intrusive, perhaps being introduced when the site was cleared for construction in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Similar features may have been present in the area of trench 1 but this area was removed before the watching brief commenced.

The foundation trench for the 18<sup>th</sup> century cottage contained 19<sup>th</sup>/20<sup>th</sup> century finds. These suggest a later date for the building, but they could have been intrusive from rodent activity or from when the floor level was reduced and a concrete floor with damp-proof membrane was inserted in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Given that previously the only evidence of prehistoric activity within 1km of the site was a disc barrow and a flint handaxe the discovery of a probably prehistoric post-hole is of importance for the archaeology of this part of the New Forest.

## **Bibliography**

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

Ordnance Survey, 1987: *Geological Survey of Great Britain (England and Wales) – drift*. Sheet 316.

Southampton City Council Archaeology Unit. 2013. *Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief at Green Ash, Lower Sandy Down, Boldre, New Forest National Park*.

**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	Topsoil. Silty clay loam. 10YR4/2. sa4
2	3	1	Subsoil. Silty clay loam. 10YR3/2. sa2
3	4	2, 6, 10, 13, 15, 17	Natural clay. Silty clay. 10YR7/8. sa3
4		3	Natural sand and clay. 10YR8/1, 5Y6/2. sa1
5	1		Demolition layer. Silty clay loam. 10YR4/1. sa2
6	3	7	Foundation trench
7	6	5	Mixed backfill. Silty clay loam. Sa3
8	9		Concrete floor
9	3	8	Brick rubble and soil layer. Silty clay loam. 10YR4/2. sa2
10	3	11, 12	Construction trench
11	10, 12	9	Backfill. Silty clay loam. 10YR4/2. sa2
12	10	11	Brick foundation of 18 <sup>th</sup> century cottage
13	3	14	Drain
14	13	1	Flint cobbles, brick rubble and soil fill. Silty clay loam. 10YR4/2. sa3
15	3	16	Post hole
16	15	9	Fill of post hole. Sandy clay loam. 10YR6/2. sa2
17	3	18	Drain
18	17	1, 2	Fill of drain. Silty clay loam. 10YR4/2. sa3
19			Unstratified finds from T1

**Appendix 2. Finds list**

<b>FINDS DATABASE</b>					
<b>Context no</b>	<b>Mat Type</b>	<b>Find Type</b>	<b>Wgt(gm)</b>	<b>No of frag</b>	<b>Description</b>
7	CERAMIC	BRICK	3063	1	225mm x 106mm x 66mm. Handmade, no frog
11	POT	FRAGMENT	2	1	China, blue sponge printed. 19th / 20th Century
11	SLATE	FRAGMENT	6	1	Welsh. 19th Century
11	GLASS	BOTTLE	5	1	Thin green. 19/20th Century
14	CERAMIC	BRICK	34	1	
14	CERAMIC	ROOF TILE	14	1	Pegtile 19th / 20th Century
16	FLINT	FLAKE	4	1	Secondary. Edge damage. Incomplete?
16	FLINT	BURNT	27	1	Reddened. Burnt?
16	POT	FRAGMENT	3	1	Verwood. 17th Century
19	CERAMIC	BRICK	1344	1	? x 110mm x 66mm. Hand made, unfrogged
19	SLATE	FRAGMENT	100	1	Welsh. 19th/20th Century
19	CERAMIC	DRAIN PIPE	126	1	Unglazed drain pipe. Probably sewer