



**39 – 47 Claremont Road, Portsmouth**  
Report on a Programme of Archaeological Works

April 2008

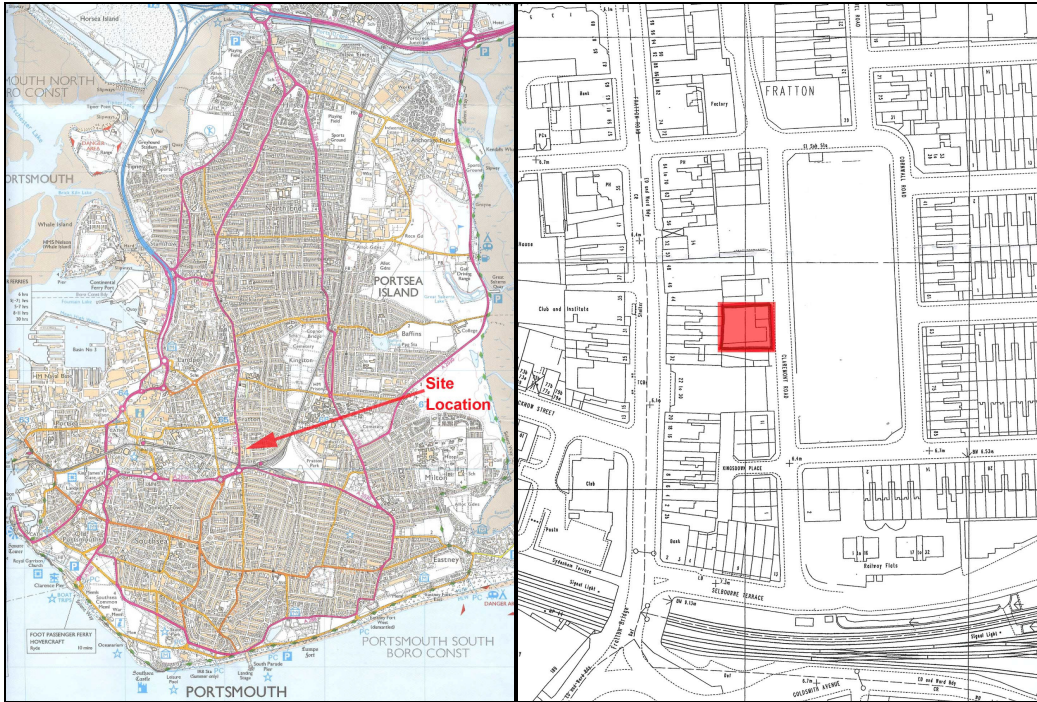


**39 – 47 Claremont Road, Portsmouth, looking north-west.**

## NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

*This document details the results of a programme of archaeological works carried out at 39 – 47 Claremont Road, Portsmouth in November 2007. Planning permission (A\*11004/AB), with an attached condition requiring archaeological work, had been given for the construction of a three storey block on the site. Three trenches were excavated in advance of the development and these revealed that 19<sup>th</sup> century cellars had destroyed much of any surviving archaeological deposits. Where archaeological features did survive, to the east and west of these cellars, they were found to consist of post-medieval brickearth extraction pits.*

## PROJECT BACKGROUND



**Figure 1** Site location. North is to the top of both images. © Crown copyright. All rights reserved. License number: AL100036068

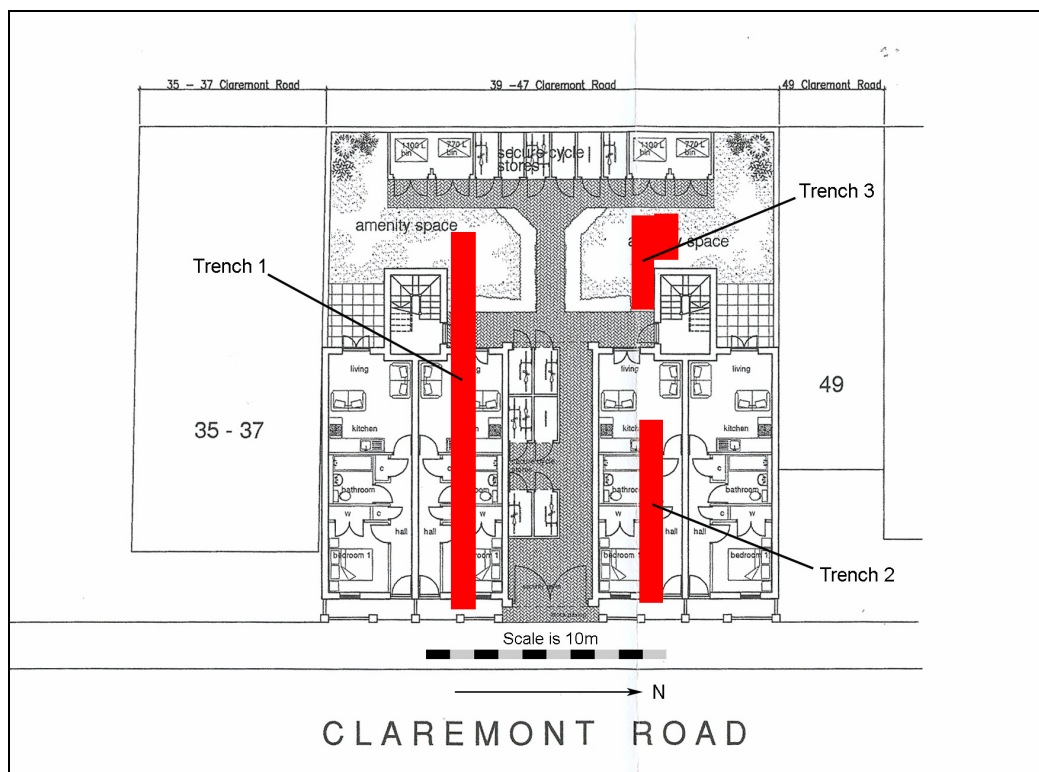
1. 39 – 47 Claremont Road lies in the Fratton area of modern Portsmouth. It is bounded on the east side by Claremont Road and on the west by houses fronting onto Fratton Road (NGR 46515 10020 and 6m aOD). The underlying geology of the site consists of Brickearth over London clay / Bracklesham Beds.
2. The developers of 39 – 47 Claremont Road received planning permission, with conditions, for the construction of a three storey block to form twelve flats on the site (Application ref. A\*11004/AB). Condition 8 of this planning permission required that an archaeologist be appointed to carry out a watching brief on all stages of the development involving ground disturbance and submit a subsequent report to the planning authority.
3. West Sussex Archaeology Ltd. was appointed by the developer to carry out such work. This document details the results of the work, following the terms of a Method Statement approved by Andy Russel, Archaeology Officer acting for Portsmouth City Council (WSA 2007). The archaeological works were carried out on Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> November 2007.
4. The location of the two trenches initially intended, in accordance with the Method Statement, was moved due to concerns over the stability of

the planned foundation trenches. In addition the trenches were narrowed from 1.6m to 1m due to the absence of the correct mechanical excavator and because it was felt that the nature of the archaeological deposits did not necessitate the full intended width.

## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

1. The development site lies within an area defined by Portsmouth City Council's *Local Areas of Archaeological Importance in the City of Portsmouth* as that of the medieval settlement of Fratton. As such it is believed that archaeological remains of medieval or post-medieval date may be disturbed by the proposed development. The settlement of Fratton is thought to take its name from a Saxon 'Frodda'. The Manor of Fratton was certainly in existence by the mid-13th century (Russel 2006)

## RESULTS



**Figure 2** Plan of the trenches excavated.

1. All three trenches excavated revealed the same sequence of deposits within them. Below any archaeological layers was the undisturbed brickearth geology (1, 22 & 35), lying at a depth of between 0.9m and 1.15m. In Trench 1, where a deeper excavation was made, the brickearth was found to overlie yellow gravel (9) at a depth of 1.5m.

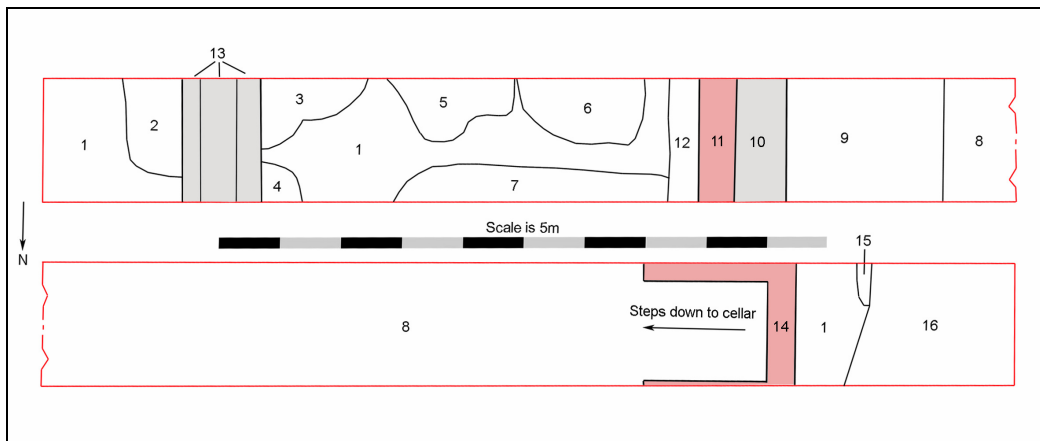


**Figure 3** Trench 1 & 2 looking east. The scale is 1m.

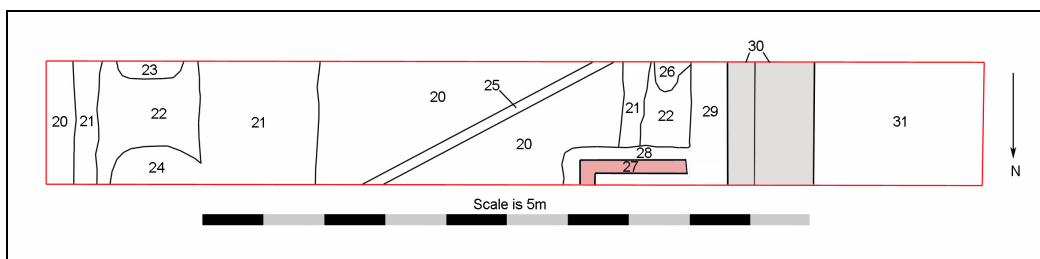
2. Dug into this brickearth were pits (2 – 7, 15, 21, 23, 24, 26 & 36) of varying depth, found in all trenches. These ranged from 0.28m to 0.45m deep and were uniformly back-filled with dark brown silt containing occasional chalk, oyster shell, charcoal and brick. The presence of the bricks, together with two sherds of pottery also recovered from these pits, indicates a post-medieval date for the back-filling of these features. Their frequency, irregular size and shape, suggest that they were probably dug to extract the brickearth.
  
3. Above the pits was a layer of re-deposited brickearth (19 & 20), varying from 0.1 to 0.5m deep and again found throughout the trenches, where not removed by subsequent disturbance. It is probable that this layer was put down to prepare and level the ground once the pits had been abandoned and before the plot was re-used.



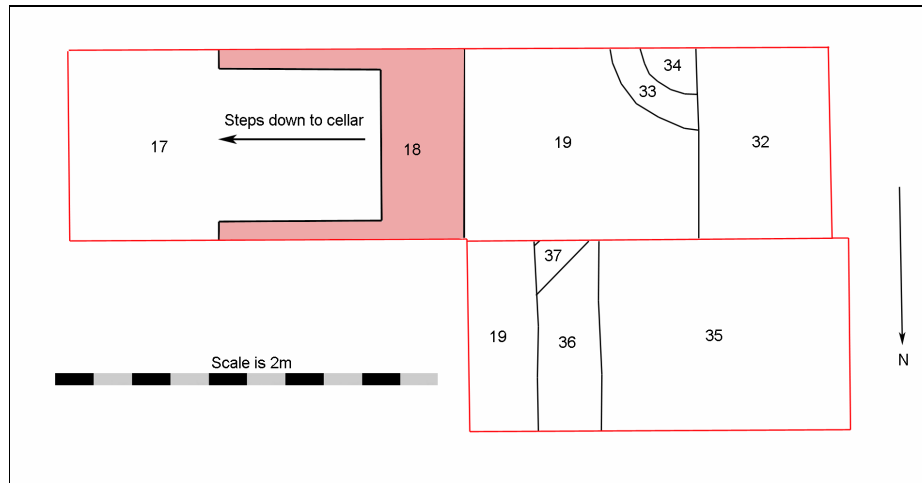
**Figure 4** Pits 3 - 7 in Trench 1, looking west. The scale is 1m.



**Figure 5** Plan of Trench 1



**Figure 6** Plan of Trench 2



**Figure 7** Plan of Trench 3.

4. The first evidence for any dwellings on the site is the remains of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century terrace, visible on the 1896 OS mapping. The front brick wall (11) of this terrace was found in Trench 1, together with its foundation cut (12). In Trench 2, where this front wall was again to be expected, it was found to have been destroyed by later development and only its foundation cut remained (29). Attached to the front of the terrace in Trench 2 were the remains of a further brick wall (27), which probably represents the remains of a coal chute. The rear wall of the terrace was found in Trenches 1 and 3, together with the remains of the steps to the cellars (14 & 18). The cellars themselves had been back-filled with rubble (8, 17 & 31), presumably from the demolition of the terrace, and where this was removed to its base, it was found that the cellars must have been c1.5m deep when in use. To the rear of the terrace evidence was found for a contemporary rain-water drainage system. A pipe trench in Trench 1 (16) was found running north-south, which may well have run into a large chalk-lined soak-away, c. 2.25m deep, the edge of which (33 & 34) was revealed in Trench 3. A second pipe (37) was seen running towards the back of the terrace from this soak-away.
  
5. The terrace was demolished in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, to be replaced by the building taken down in advance of this development. The concrete foundations (13, 10 & 30) for this second structure were found running north-south in Trenches 1 & 2. An associated cable run (25) was also found in Trench 2. Overlying all these demolished structures was a layer of modern rubble, varying from 0.1m to 0.6m in depth.



**Figure 8** Trench 3, looking west, showing the cellar steps and in the background a hole punctured through the concrete cap to the soak-away. The scale is 1m.

## **SURVIVAL OF DEPOSITS**

1. The construction of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century terrace, with its cellars, had removed all trace of any archaeological deposits over much of the area to be developed. In front of the terrace, and to a depth of c. 5.5m from the pavement alongside Claremont Road, a band of relatively undisturbed deposits remained. This appeared to consist of numerous brickearth extraction pits of post-medieval date. To the rear of the terrace similar deposits were revealed, although the trenches excavated extended for only c.1.5m beyond its back walls into an area partially disturbed by associated rain-water drainage. No evidence was found for any buildings associated with medieval or post-medieval Fratton.

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

West Sussex Archaeology Ltd. 2007 **Method Statement for a Programme of Archaeological Works at 39 – 47 Claremont Road, Portsmouth.** October 2007. Unpublished.