



© Southampton City Council

Southampton Archaeology Unit

Archaeological watching brief at the Oasis Academy, Romsey Road, Southampton.

SOU 1617

EL Anderson BA MA AlfA and
Dr A Russel BA PhD MlfA
2013

Report 1129

Client: Oasis Academy



Contents

1. Executive Summary.....	2
2. Introduction.....	2
3. Aims of the investigation.....	2
4. Methodology.....	2
5. Site location and geology.....	3
6. Historical and archaeological background.....	3
7. Results of the watching brief.....	5
7.1. Introduction.....	5
7.2. Natural.....	6
7.3. Modern layers.....	6
7.4. Topsoil and sub-soil.....	8
8. Conclusions.....	8
Bibliography.....	8
Appendix 1. Context list.....	9

Archaeological watching brief at the Oasis Academy, Romsey Road, Southampton.

By EL Anderson BA MA AlfA and Dr A Russel BA PhD MlfA

Site code	SOU 1617
Archaeology Unit report	1129
Ordnance Survey grid reference	SU 38132 15795
Planning application number	12/00985/FUL
Accession Number	2013.10

1. Executive Summary

The Archaeology Unit of Southampton City Council carried out an archaeological watching brief on the replacement of an existing grass sports pitch with an all-weather sports pitch at the Oasis Academy, Romsey Road, Southampton (fig 1) on behalf of Oasis Academy. The site was in an area of prehistoric finds but no archaeological features were observed. The deepest layer was natural clay with sandy patches, situated 0.8m–1.3m below the surface. The expected brickearth was not observed and it appeared to have been removed and replaced by a number of modern layers that contained fragments of 19th–20th century brick, plastic, concrete and metal, which had been used to build up and level the site. Burnt flint found in the modern layers may have been redeposited from the site, but it could have been brought in as part of the make-up.

2. Introduction

2.1 The Archaeology Unit of Southampton City Council carried out an archaeological watching brief on the replacement of the existing grass sports with an all-weather sports pitch with fence and lighting masts at the Oasis Academy, Romsey Road, Southampton (fig 1) on behalf of Oasis Academy. The observations were carried out by EL Anderson BA MA AlfA between the 21/2/2013 and the 5/3/2013. The project was managed by Dr A Russel BA PhD MlfA, and Dr A Russel BA PhD MlfA identified the finds recovered from the site.

3. Aims of the investigation

3.1 The aims of the investigation as defined in the written scheme of investigation were '*To investigate the human use of the area, and to record the nature of the natural deposits*'. (SCCAU 2013).

4. Methodology

4.1 The watching brief was kept on the removal of the existing grass sports pitch and its replacement with an all-weather sports pitch with fence and lighting masts. The work was carried out by machinery under intermittent archaeological observation. 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).

5. Site location and geology

5.1 The site lies at grid ref SU 38132 15795 to the south of the newly-constructed Oasis Academy to the west of Romsey Road, on the north edge of Southampton (fig 1). The geology of the site is Made Ground with River Terrace Deposits 3 to the south (British Geological Survey 1987). These deposits overlie the Wittering Formation and London Clay.

6. Historical and archaeological background

6.1 The site lies in area 16 of the Local Areas of Archaeological Potential as defined in the City of Southampton Core Strategy 2010. Area 2 lies to the south; it includes scattered finds of prehistoric and later material, including a prehistoric earthwork known as Alderbrook Camp and part of an 8th-century boundary baulk between the estate of Millbrook and the monastic estate of Nursling.

6.2 The area became part of Southampton in the late 20th century. Before then it was part of Nursling parish, held as two separate manors in the medieval period. Maps of the 17th and 18th centuries show no houses in the area and some use the legend Nursling Common for the vicinity (Corpus Christi Langdon Map A.O.337.A of 1615; Milne's Map of Hampshire 1791).

6.3 Chance prehistoric finds have been made in the area and are recorded in Southampton's Historic Environment Record. They include Neolithic flint tools from Rosewall Road and Horsebridge Way, and a Neolithic flint scraper and burnt flints from Upper Brownhill Road. Prehistoric evidence has also been found to the north in Test Valley, such as flint flakes from Rownhams House.

6.4 Evidence of prehistoric settlements has been found in the surrounding area. At SOU 946, some 700m to the south, remains of an Iron Age settlement, including twelve hearth-like features, were found. The pottery evidence suggests that the site was occupied between the 4th and 2nd centuries BC. At SOU 1162, some 300m to the south-east, prehistoric pottery and flints were found in test pits. Some 700m to the west a settlement of Bronze Age date was found during groundworks for the new Ordnance Survey building; the adjacent area was later used for an Iron Age burial ground. Some 1400m to the south-west at SOU 1547 Bronze Age and Iron Age material was recovered.

6.5 Archaeological projects SOU 1545 and SOU 1554 were undertaken from 2010 to 2012 before and during the construction of the Oasis Academy. Some of this work was within the area of the current site. 'Archaeological features included prehistoric gulleys and pits, Saxon and medieval hearths, a post-medieval boundary ditch and early modern and modern boundary ditches. Many undated features including stake holes were found; these are more likely to be Saxon or medieval than prehistoric. A small finds assemblage was recovered, including worked and burnt flint and Iron Age, medieval and post-medieval pottery and modern finds' (Historic Environment Record monument record MSH4880).

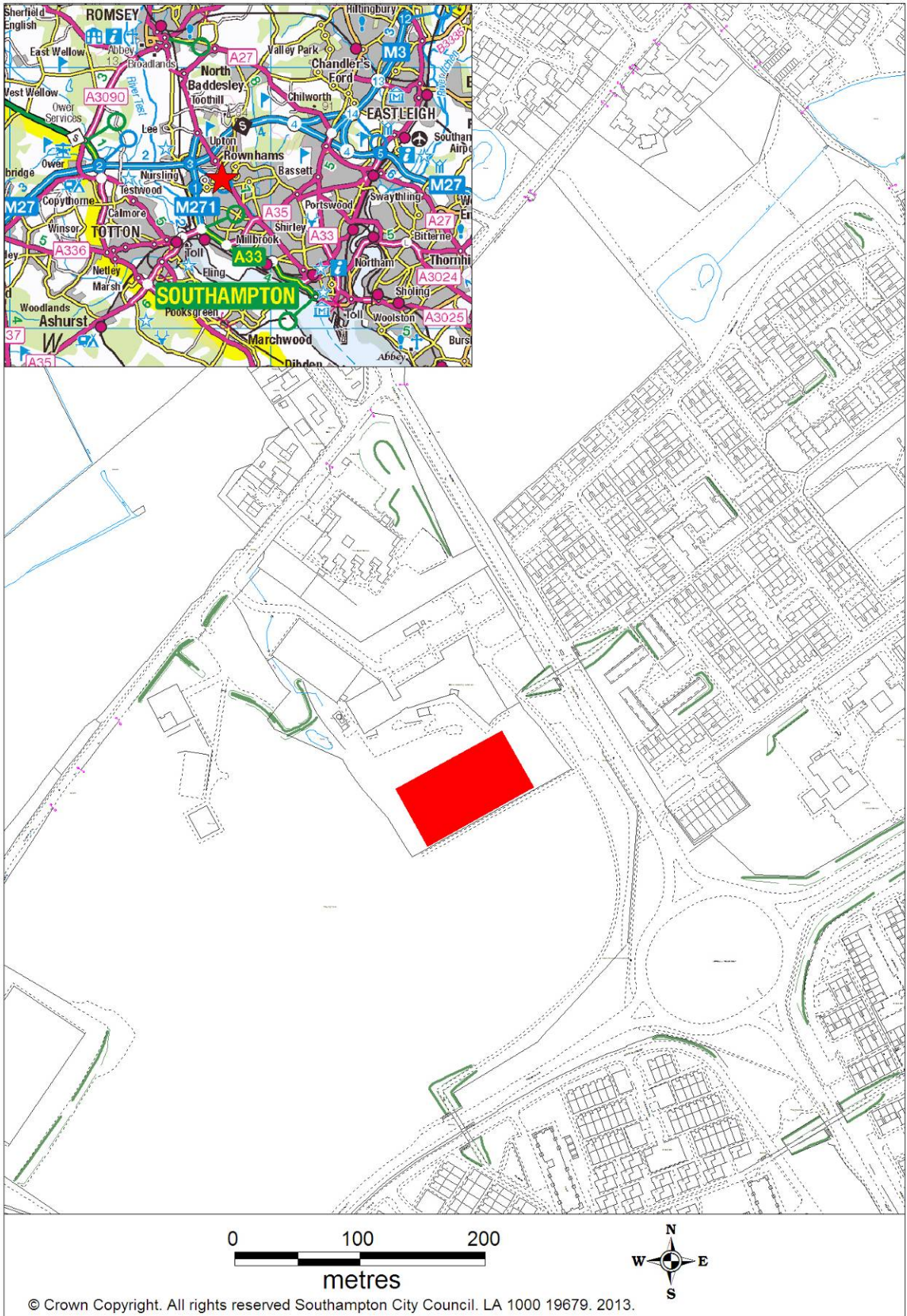


Figure 1: Site location, site shown in red

6.6 A Roman road (route 422) between Winchester and Nursling ran to the north of Southampton. A section was excavated across it in the Chandler's Ford area and this suggested that it was of 1st century AD date (McAvoy 1986). Its line runs along the western edge of Clams Copse and is visible as a slight earthwork in the field to the north of the wood. A projection of this line to the southwest continues as Baker's Drove and Redbridge Lane.

7. Results of the watching brief

7.1. Introduction

A total of ten trenches were dug (fig 2). Trenches 1 and 2 were dug for drainage in the north and west of the site. They were 500mm deep and 400mm wide. Trench 3 was the level reduction for the new pitch and covered an area 70m long, 50m wide and 200mm deep. Trenches 4, 5, 6, and 7 were dug for the light bases. They were 1.1m square and 1.3m deep. Lines of post holes for fences were observed in the west, east, and south of the site, trenches 8, 9, and 10. The individual post-holes were 300mm in diameter and 500mm deep.

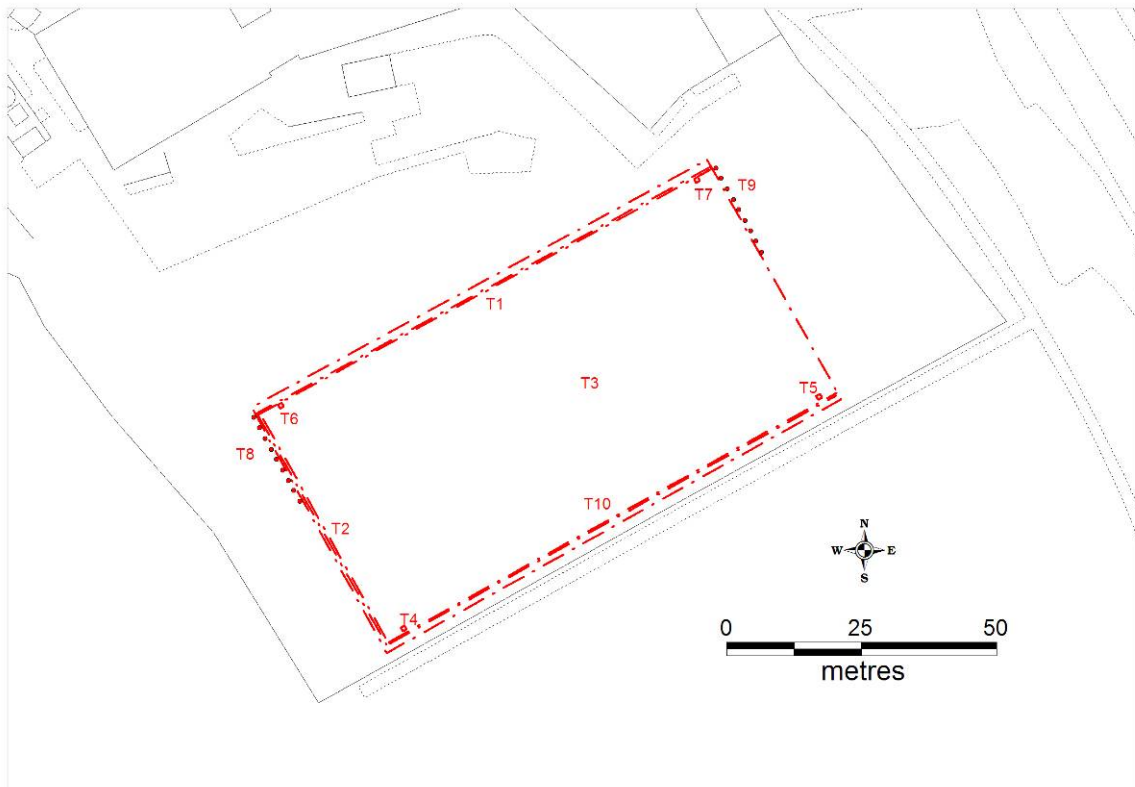


Figure 2: Site location, site shown in red

7.2. *Natural*

Natural clay with sandy patches, context 4, was observed in the deeper trenches 4-7 (figs 3-5). It was found between 0.8m and 1.3m below the surface and was a brownish yellow (10YR6/6) sandy clay, at least 100mm thick



Figure 3: North facing section, trench 5, showing layers 1, 5, and 4

7.3. *Modern layers*

Above the natural was a variety of modern layers, layers 5, 6, 7 and 9. These layers may have been deposited to level the site.

Layer 5 was situated in trenches 4 and 5; it was situated some 300-400mm below the surface and was 500mm thick (fig 3). It was a dark greyish brown (10YR4/2) silty clay loam, containing small fragments of brick.

Layer 6 was situated 800mm below the surface in trench 4. It was a greyish brown (10YR5/2) silty clay loam, some 500mm thick, containing some large fragments of concrete.

Layer 7 was situated 800mm below the surface in trench 6 (fig 5). It was a very dark grey (10YR3/1) silty clay loam. It contained fragments of brick and wood, and was some 400mm thick.

Layer 9 was situated 600mm below the surface in trench 7 and was some 400mm thick (fig 4). It was a grey (10YR5/1) silty clay loam and contained fragments of plastic and a metal pipe.



Figure 4: South facing section, trench 7, showing 2, 8, 9 and 4

Above layers 5, 6, 7, and 9 were layers 3 and 8.

Re-deposited brickearth layer 3 was observed in trenches 1, 2, 4, 5, 6 and 7 (figs 4 and 5). It was situated 500mm below the surface and was some 600mm thick. It was a light yellowish brown (10YR6/4), silty clay loam and contained some burnt flints and fragments of brick and tile.



Figure 5: South facing section, trench 6, showing layers 2, 3, 7 and 4

Layer 8 was observed in the eastern end of trench 1 and in trench 7 (fig 4). It consisted of a mix of re-deposited brickearth and gravel, some 200mm below the surface. It was a yellowish brown (10YR5/4) silty clay loam. It was 500mm thick and contained fragments of plastic.

7.4. Topsoil and sub-soil

Sub-soil 2 was observed in trenches 1, 3, 6 and 7, some 200mm below the surface (fig 4 and 5). It was a greyish brown (10YR5/2), silty clay loam some 300 – 400mm thick.

Topsoil 1 was observed in the majority of site (fig 3). It was a dark grey (10YR4/1), silty clay loam some 200mm thick.

8. Conclusions

No archaeological features were observed. The deepest layer was natural clay with sandy patches, situated 0.8m-1.3m below the surface. River Terrace Deposits were not observed in any of the trenches and they appeared to have been replaced by a number of modern deposits that contained fragments of 19th–20th century brick, plastic, concrete and metal. These layers may have been used to build up the site.

Bibliography

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

McAvoy, F, 1986, 'A section across the Otterbourne–New Forest Roman road (route 422)'. *Proceedings of the Hampshire Field Club and Archaeological Society* **42**.

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

Russel AD, 2013, *Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief with option to excavate at the Oasis Academy, Romsey Road, Southampton*. Southampton City Council Archaeology Unit.

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	2		Top soil. Silty clay loam. 10YR4/1. sa3
2	3	1	Layer. Silty clay loam. 10YR5/2. sa3
3	7	2	Re-deposited brickearth layer. Silty clay loam. 10YR6/4. sa2
4		5	Natural clay and sand. Sandy clay. 10YR6/6. sa1
5	4	1	Layer. Silty clay loam. 10YR4/2. sa3
6	4	5	Layer. Silty clay loam. 10YR5/2. sa4
7	4	3	Layer. Silty clay loam. 10YR3/1. sa2
8	9	2	Layer. Silty clay loam. 10YR5/4. sa3
9	4	8	Layer. Silty clay loam. 10YR5/4. sa2