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Southampton Archaeology Unit Report 1304

Archaeological Watching Brief at 269 Wimpson Lane, Southampton SOU 1761

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2017

Client: Mr Mark Breen



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Cover photograph. Mr Breen and his team.

Summary Sheet

Site name/address: 269 Wimpson Lane, Southampton.
SOU site code: SOU 1761
Contractor site code: SOU 1761
HET consultation number: 7896
Planning application number: 15/02255/FUL
Grid reference centroid: SU 438605 114366
Fieldwork dates: 6/6/17
Type of fieldwork: watching brief with provision for excavation
Name of contracting unit: Southampton City Council Archaeology Unit
Report author: Dr A D Russel BA PhD MCIfA
Report number: 1304
Name of client: Mr Mark Breen
Summary: The Archaeology Unit of Southampton City Council carried out a watching brief on groundworks associated with the erection of a house in the rear garden of 269 Wimpson Lane, Southampton. The natural geology on site was the River Terrace Gravel overlain by silty clay of the Wittering Formation, on the north side of a valley in which flows 'the Wimpson stream'. The upper part of the Wittering Formation clay showed evidence of bioturbation and leaching, and also contained burnt and reddened flints suggestive of human activity, but none of the flints appeared to be within archaeological features. No certain archaeology was observed.

Report on the Archaeological Watching Brief with provision for excavation at 269 Wimpson Lane, Southampton. SOU 1761

By Dr A D Russel BA PhD MCI fA

1. Summary

The Archaeology Unit of Southampton City Council carried out a watching brief on groundworks associated with the erection of a house in the rear garden of 269 Wimpson Lane, Southampton. The natural geology on site was the River Terrace Gravel overlain by silty clay of the Wittering Formation, on the north side of a valley in which flows 'the Wimpson stream'. The upper part of the Wittering Formation clay showed evidence of bioturbation and leaching, and also contained burnt and reddened flints suggestive of human activity, but none of the flints appeared to be within archaeological features. No certain archaeology was observed.

2. Introduction

2.1 Planning permission was granted under application 15/02255/FUL for the construction of a 4-bed house. A number of conditions were placed on the works including conditions 19 and 20:

19. Archaeological watching brief with provision for excavation [Pre-Commencement Condition]

No development shall take place within the site until the implementation of a programme of archaeological work has been secured in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that the archaeological investigation is initiated at an appropriate point in development procedure.

20. Archaeological watching brief with provision for excavation work programme [Performance Condition]

The developer will secure the completion of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that the archaeological investigation is completed.

2.2 The HET number is 8397.

2.3 The Southampton City Council Archaeology Unit carried out the watching brief with provision for excavation on 6/6/17, in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation agreed by the local planning authority. The observations were made by Dr A D Russel.

3. Site location, topography and geology

2.1. The property lies to the south of Wimpson Gardens at grid ref SU 438605 114366 (fig 1). The site lies at 13.77m OD. Topographically the site lies on the east side of a valley in which flows 'the Wimpson stream' (Burgess 1982, 4).

3.3 The geology map (<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>) shows that the site lies on an area of Wittering formation, with Gravel Terrace 3 to the south and Gravel Terrace 4 to the north (<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>).



Figure 1. Location of the site shown by blue star.

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4. Archaeological and historical background

4.1 The site lies within Area 16 of the Local Areas of Archaeological Potential (LAAP) as defined in the City of Southampton Core Strategy 2010. Area 16 covers any part of the city not covered by Areas 1–15. In this case the site is to the south of Area 2 which is described as follows:

A series of streams originate in this area, making it a likely area for prehistoric settlement. Neolithic finds have been discovered here, and evidence of small prehistoric settlements of Bronze Age and Iron Age date, notably an Iron Age settlement at Baron's Mead. The area is adjacent to Adanac Park just outside the city boundary, where a Bronze Age settlement and Iron Age barrow/inhumation cemetery have been found, the latter of potential national importance. At Nursling Plantation, at the east end of the area, is the prehistoric earthwork known as Aldermoor Camp and surrounding land. Nearby is part of an 8th century boundary baulk.

4.2 To the west of the site lies the valley of the River Test where numerous prehistoric and Roman finds have been made e.g. about 1km from the site at Franconia Drive, Bronze Age, Romano-British and later activity was recorded in 1992, with a Wessex Middle Rhine Beaker being recovered (see Beamish and Hearne 1994 in Proc Hants Field Club & Archaeol Soc, **50**, 35–41). A watching brief at Test Park Community Sports Facility (SOU 1547) recorded prehistoric ditches with Bronze Age and Iron Age dating evidence. Closer to the site a new school building with associated works was constructed at Newlands Primary School, Ullswater Road, Southampton (SOU 1564) (Grid Ref SU 383143) in 2011. Iron Age, Saxon, medieval and post-medieval features were recorded. The Iron Age activity was marked by ditches, pits, post-holes, stake-holes and a hearth. A curved line of post-holes was probably a circular building. A second building was of less regular form. Fragments of prehistoric pottery, burnt flints and worked flint were recovered. A radiocarbon date of 390-410BC was obtained from charcoal in one feature. Saxon activity was marked by three shallow features containing charcoal and burnt flint, and a ditch. Three radiocarbon dates spanned the period AD 420 to AD 770.

4.3 Late 19th century maps show that the site lay in an area of woodland called Pickles Copse (fig 2).



Figure 2. The 1895 (published 1897) Ordnance Survey map showing the approximate position of the site. Sheet LXV.1

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5. Aims of the project.

5.1 The watching brief aimed to make a record of any archaeology disturbed by the works and to determine the extent, condition, nature, character, quality, and date of any archaeological remains encountered, as dictated by current best practice.

5.2 An additional aim was to identify and record the nature, dimensions, and relationship of natural deposits on the site, and to assess the potential of the natural deposits to contain or conceal archaeology.

5.3 For the purposes of this project, archaeologically significant remains and contexts were defined as remains and contexts prior to 1850.

6. Watching brief methodology

6.1 The methodology followed that specified in the Written Scheme of Investigation (Russel 2017).

6.2 Three trenches were dug (fig 2). The western trench, 1m deep, was dug for a garden wall. The central trench was dug for the house foundations and was also 1m deep. The eastern trench was dug for a soakaway. It was excavated to undisturbed natural at 400mm below the ground surface, in the presence of the archaeologist, and was later excavated to a greater depth. The services were taken from those previously installed to the house to the north, and the existing soakaway for that house was used to take the rainwater from the west end of the building.

6.3 The trench and features were mapped to the National Grid. All archaeological records were made using the Southampton City Council archaeological recording system. Soils were recorded following the Soil Survey Handbook and colours of deposits were recorded using the Munsell Soil Color Chart and these are used in this report (Munsell Color 2000). Contexts 1–4 were assigned. Selected photographs are in Appendix 1. No finds were retained.

7. Results

The results are presented in chronological order from the oldest to the most recent.

7.1 Natural deposits

7.1.1 The earliest deposit encountered was the River Terrace gravel, context 4, which was just reached at the base of the trenches. It was compact flint gravel in a matrix of silty clay. It was reddish yellow (7.5YR 7/8) in colour.

7.1.2 Above the gravel was the Wittering Formation, context 3 (figs 5, 6, & 7). Above the undisturbed Wittering Formation was a very similar material but showing signs of weathering with worm tracks and occasional root holes. The deposit, context 2, was a compact mottled silty clay loam, reddish yellow (7.5YR 6/6) in colour, 180mm thick on the south side of the site, and up to 300mm thick on the north side. The top of this layer appeared paler at the east end of the site (fig 5) probably caused by leaching. Rare burnt and reddened flints suggestive of human activity were found throughout the deposit but no features were seen.

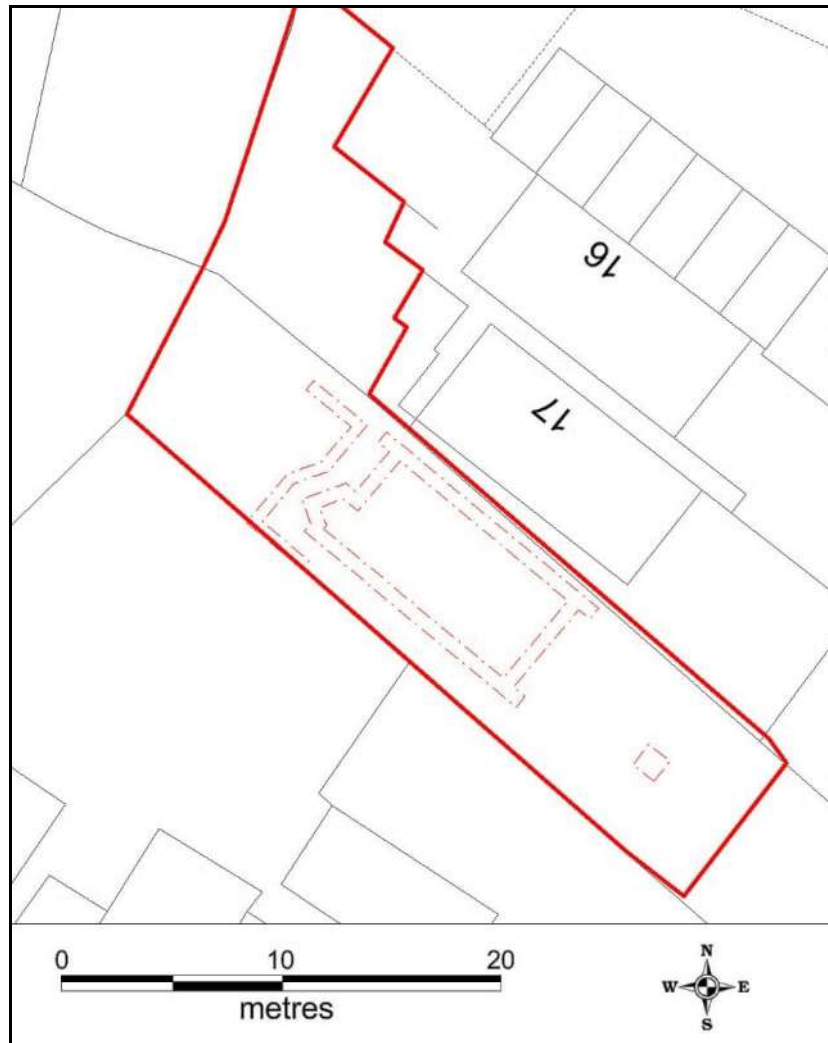


Figure 3. Plan of the site, boundary in red. Excavated trenches marked by red dashed lines.

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7.2 Early Modern.

7.2.1 Above context 3 was some 300mm of topsoil, context 2. It was a pinkish gray (7.5YR 6/2) silty clay loam with occasional flint gravel. It produced rare fragments of china and English stoneware of late 19th century date, but had probably been building up for many centuries. No finds were retained.

8. Conclusion

8.1 The natural geology on site was the River Terrace Gravel overlain by silty clay of the Wittering Formation.

8.2 The upper part of the Wittering Formation clay showed evidence of bioturbation and leaching, and also contained burnt and reddened flints suggestive of human activity, but none of the flints appeared to be within archaeological features. No certain archaeology was observed.

Bibliography

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Burgess L, 1982 *Streams and Watercourse of Southampton*. Revised edition

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Appendix 1 Photographs



Figure 4. General view of the site looking east.



Figure 5. The deposits at the east end of the foundation trench. Scale 1m.



Figure 6. The deposits in the soakaway trench. Scale 1m.



**Figure 7. The deposits in the south side of the foundation trench. Scale 1m.
Note burnt flint adjacent to label 2.**

Appendix 1. Context information

CONTEXT	CATEGORY	KEYWORD	MUNSELL PAGE	HUE	TEXTURE	DESCRIPTION	BELOW	ABOVE
1	LAYER	TOPSOIL	7.5YR	6/2	SILTY CLAY LOAM	Garden soil		2
2	LAYER	WEATHERED NATURAL CLAY	7.5YR	6/6	SILTY CLAY	Weathered upper profile	1	3
3	LAYER	NATURAL CLAY	7.5YR	7/8	SILTY CLAY	Un-weathered clay	2	4
4	LAYER	NATURAL GRAVEL	7.5YR	7/8	GRAVEL	Natural flint gravel	3	