

**An Archaeological Watching Brief at Trafalgar Gate Link
Road, Portsmouth, Hampshire**

**NGR 464289 101347
(SU 643 013)**

Planning Ref: 09/01375/FUL

**Project No: 4372
Site Code: TGP11**

**ASE Report No: 2011164
OASIS id: 105306
Portsmouth City Museum, Accession No: 2010/311**

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Abstract

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Archaeology South-East on behalf of Portsmouth City Council during works associated with the new Trafalgar Gate link road. A small number of footings associated with 19th century buildings were identified though significant destruction of the structures had occurred through bomb damage, grubbing out and modern construction and service works. No evidence was recovered of any activity prior to the 19th century.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Background

1.1.1 Archaeology South-East (ASE; a division of the University College London, UCL, Centre for Applied Archaeology, CAA, at the Institute of Archaeology, IoA) was commissioned by Portsmouth City Council (PCC) to undertake an archaeological watching brief on the proposed Trafalgar Gate Link Road, Portsmouth (NGR: 464289 101347; Figure 1).

1.1.2 Trafalgar Gate is currently used as the secondary entrance to H.M. Naval Base, Portsmouth (Unicorn Gate being the main entrance). The Ministry of Defence has recently upgraded the capacity and security of Trafalgar Gate with the intention of it becoming the main entrance. Provision of a new access route directly linking the gate with the main trunk route into Portsmouth, Mile End Road, is an integral part of this scheme. This report deals with the link road only.

1.2 Geology and Topography

1.2.1 The British and Geological Survey Sheet 317 shows the site to lie on Reading beds overlying valley gravels.

1.3 Planning Background

1.3.1 Due to potential impacts upon archaeological remains, Andy Russel the archaeology advisor to PCC advised James Brewer, Senior Planning Officer PCC, that any archaeological deposits encountered during groundworks should be properly recorded. ASE produced a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI; ASE 2010) for the watching brief which was submitted to and approved by PCC.

1.4 Aims and Objectives

1.4.1 The general objective of the work as given in the WSI (ibid) was:

To monitor the groundworks in order to ensure that any features, artefacts or ecofacts of archaeological interest exposed and affected are recorded and interpreted to appropriate standards.

1.5 Scope of Report

1.5.1 This report represents the findings of the watching brief undertaken by Diccon Hart, Sarah Porteus, Chris Russell, and John Cook between the 20th of July and the 15th of the September 2010. The project was managed by Andy Leonard (fieldwork) and Jim Stevenson (post-excavation).

2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 An archaeological desk based assessment report (DBA; ASE 2009) was produced prior to the commencement of fieldwork. To summarise, the report provided the following assessment of archaeological potential:

‘The potential for discovery of new sites has been revealed by a review of known archaeological sites in the immediate vicinity. The historic land use for the Appraisal Site can be summarised as probable agricultural use (largely grazing) and possible small-scale settlement activity from the prehistoric period up until the first half of the 19th century, followed by dense urbanisation, initially residential with a scatter of industrial use, but latterly wholly industrial. The estimated potential for sites and/or findspots being located within the appraisal area can be summarised thus:

Prehistoric – Low
Romano-British - Low
Anglo-Saxon - Low
Medieval – Low
Post-medieval – Very High

To conclude, the Site is considered to lie within an area of generally low archaeological potential apart from urban deposits relating to the 19th and 20th centuries. However, the presence of early unrecorded settlement phases cannot be ruled out.’

- 2.2 The DBA (*ibid*) went on to determine from current knowledge that the area first became urbanised during the post-medieval period and by 1823 houses are depicted on maps of both Great Prospect Road and to the North of Regent Place, both within the area affected by the development. Further construction work is known to have been undertaken throughout the 19th century with development becoming intense in the latter half of the century. During the Second World War the area sustained a direct hit during bombing raids. Following which, any remaining terraced housing was replaced by industrial units.

3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

3.1 The methodology within the WSI specified 4 sites (ASE 2010; Figure 2) of particular interest for post-medieval remains. In these areas it was proposed that the contractor should allow a period of 2 weeks per site to undertake formal archaeological excavation and recording *should remains be found*. ASE was not informed of the commencement of works which prevented this process from occurring. Instead, remains were recorded as best as possible during the intrusive works under watching brief conditions following the excavation and recording methodology as laid out in section 5.0 of the WSI (*ibid*).

3.2 When and where ASE was notified of works, an archaeologist was present to observe any areas of intrusive groundwork. Where remains were found the main contractor allowed sufficient time for the recording of the remains directly threatened by the works.

3.3 Excavation and Recording Techniques

3.3.1 All archaeological features and deposits were recorded using the standard context record sheets used by ASE and in accordance with IfA guidelines (IfA 2001).

3.3.2 All mechanical excavation was, where required and where practicable, undertaken using a flat-bladed bucket.

3.3.3 Archaeological structures, features and deposits exposed or excavated were planned onto a copy of the Ordnance Survey map not smaller than 1:2500 scale by means of total station or taped offsets from known points and levelled with respect to OD.

3.3.4 An accession number has been obtained from Portsmouth City Museum (2010/311). This has been used as the unique site identifier for all site records, photographs and finds.

3.3.5 A full monochrome and colour film and digital photographic record was maintained.

3.3.6 PCC was kept informed of progress so that they could monitor the work as necessary.

3.3.7 Archaeological features and relevant spoil heaps were scanned with a metal detector.

3.4 Archive procedure

3.4.1 Portsmouth City Museum has agreed to accept the archive under Accession No: 2010/311. The contents of the site archive are tabulated below.

Number of Contexts	23
No. of files/paper record	1
Plan and sections sheets	0
Bulk Samples	0
Photographs	1 digital CD
Bulk finds	1 small box
Registered finds	0
Environmental flots/residue	0

Table 1: Quantification of site archive

4.0 RESULTS (Figures 2 – 5)

4.1 The natural substrate was variable consisting of deposits of alluvial clay [006] overlying river terrace gravels [007]. Cut into the top of these deposits were a number of foundations of 19th century buildings.

4.2 Site 1 (Figure 3)

4.2.1 In the area of site 1 the natural substrate was overlain by buried topsoil [024] of probable 18th or 19th century date c 0.40m thick.

4.2.2 To the north of site 1, cut into [024], was a long wall [021] believed to be the remains of cellars of buildings possibly the Cemetery Lodge were identified.

4.2.3 The wall [021] was extant to a height of c 0.60m and ran for a length of c 13.40m north-north east by south-south west. It was built in stretcher bond with a series of recessed archways of 0.90m width facing west south-west. The bricks used were an unfrogged standard sized brick with sharp arises in an orange sandy fabric and of probable 19th century date

4.2.4 To the north of this after an area of disturbance containing a modern concrete pit, the wall continued [023] but was only partly exposed.

4.2.5 A parallel wall [022], built of the same materials and bond as [021/023] was observed c 10m to the east is likely to form part of the same structure.

4.3 Site 2

4.3.1 Only part of the works in the area of site 2 were monitored as ASE were not informed of the commencement of work in the area, however, a test pit viewed during the watching brief revealed the natural alluvial clay directly overlain by modern made ground.

4.4 Site 3 (Figure 4)

4.4.1 Cut into the natural alluvial clay substrate at site 3 were the foundations of several 19th century structures. These are almost certainly associated with the properties that previously stood on the north side of Regent Place:

- Walls [003] and [004] of unfrogged 19th century brick
- Walls [005] and [013] of brick with a shallow frog of mid 18th or 19th century date
- Brick culvert [012] and an internal sleeper wall [010] of unfrogged 19th century brick
- An unmortared brick well [026] or cess pit was in former garden

4.4.2 Between walls [003] and [005] a dump of demolition rubble [002] of up to 0.50m thickness resulting from the levelling of the buildings was recorded.

4.4.3 A further demolition deposit [011] of c 0.50m was observed between walls [005] and [010].

4.4.4 The whole area was covered by a c 0.40m thick deposit of made ground [001].

4.5 Site 4 (Figure 5)

4.5.1 Natural clay substrate [006] was overlain in isolated patches by [015] a 0.25m thick mid brown sandy silt with occasional stone and brick rubble inclusions.

4.5.2 Cut into [015] were a series of walls relating to the demolished 19th century buildings that previously faced onto the corner of Regent Place and Ward Bay/Sydney Street:

- North-south wall [017] c 1.10m long, stretcher bonded
- A possible east to west return [018] of wall [017] of bricks with a shallow rectangular frog of mid 18th to 19th century date
- A wall [019] running north to south parallel to Ward Bay/Sydney Street.

4.5.3 A number of demolition grubbing cuts [016] were visible across site 4 had largely removed any structure.

List of recorded contexts

Number	Type	Description	Max. Length	Max. Width	Deposit Thickness	Area
001	Dep	Made ground	Tr.	Tr.	0.40	Site 3
002	Dep	Demolition deposit	6.75	3.00	0.50	Site 3
003	Mas	foundation	3.00	0.35	0.30	Site 3
004	Mas	foundation	3.00	0.35	0.30	Site 3
005	Mas	foundation	1.50+	0.35	0.40	Site 3
006	Nat	Natural clay	N/A	N/A	N/A	All
007	Nat	Natural River gravels	N/A	N/A	0.50	Site 1
008	Void	Same as 006				
009	Void	Same as 006				
010	Mas	Sleeper wall	3.00	0.70	0.40	Site 3
011	Dep	Demolition deposit	3.00	0.70	0.50	Site 3
012	Mas	culvert	0.70	0.40	0.50	Site 3
013	Mas	Foundation	1.00	0.22	0.40	Site 3
014	Void	Same as 006				
015	Dep	Buried soil	Tr.	TR.	0.25	Site 4
016	Cut	Grubbing out holes	30	30	0.80	Site 4
017	Mas	Foundation	1.10	0.20	0.40	Site 4
018	Mas	foundation	0.80	0.30	0.40+	Site 4
019	Mas	Foundation	1.00	0.50	0.20+	Site 4
020	Cut	Foundation cut	N/A	N/A	N/A	Site 4
021	Mas	Cellar?	13.40	0.30+	0.60	Site 1
022	Mas	Foundation	6.00	0.30	0.10	Site 1
023	Mas	foundation	0.40	0.50	0.20	Site 1
024	Dep	Buried soil	Tr.	Tr.	0.40	Site 1
025	Cut	Cut for features site 1	N/A	N/A	N/A	Site 1
026	Mas	Well	1.22	1.22	2.77	Site2

5.0 THE FINDS

5.1 A small assemblage of ceramic building material (CBM) was recovered:

Context	CBM	Wt (g)
3	1	2832
5	1	2832
18	1	2520

Table 2: Quantification of finds

5.2 The Ceramic Building Material by Sarah Porteus

5.2.1 Three complete post-medieval bricks were recovered from three contexts on site.

5.2.2 Context [003] contained an unfrogged brick of 230mm by 110mm by 65mm in an orange sandy fabric with sparse coarse flint inclusions. Maker's mark 'CHB' was stamped into the surface. The location of the brickmakers has not been identified though flint inclusions in the fabric suggest local regional production. The brick is of 19th century date.

5.2.3 Context [005] contained a single brick of 230mm by 105mm by 65mm dimensions with a shallow rectangular frog. The brick is in a brown sandy fabric with sparse black iron rich inclusions and burnt organic voids, the brick is of mid 18th to 19th century date.

5.2.4 Context [018] contained a brick of 226mm by 112mm by 67mm dimensions with a shallow frog in a similar fabric to the brick from context [003]. The brick was mortared on the base and slightly sooted on both stretchers and is of probable 19th century date.

5.2.5 Fabric samples from the assemblage were retained and the bulk of the material was recorded in detail on pro-forma recording forms for archive then discarded.

6.0 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1** The watching brief has demonstrated that some foundations of the 19th century houses depicted on Ordnance Survey maps remained though a majority had been grubbed out during demolition and subsequent works.
- 6.2** Indeed, a combination of WWII bomb damage, subsequent demolition and levelling as well as mechanical excavation for the monitored groundworks had rendered almost all of the remains to rubble and impossible to make any sense of.
- 6.3** Some of these structures will survive *in situ* beneath the new road in areas 1, 3, and 4.
- 6.4** No evidence was recovered of any activity prior to the 19th century.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

ASE 2009. *An Archaeological Desk-based Assessment of Trafalgar Gate, Flathouse Road, Portsmouth*. Unpublished client report

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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HER Summary Form

Site Code	TGP10					
Identification Name and Address	Trafalgar Gate, Portsmouth					
County, District &/or Borough	Hampshire					
OS Grid Refs.	464289 101347					
Geology	Reading Beds overlying River Gravels					
Arch. South-East Project Number	4372					
Type of Fieldwork	Eval.	Excav.	Watching Brief <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Standing Structure	Survey	Other
Type of Site	Green Field	Shallow Urban <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Deep Urban	Other		
Dates of Fieldwork	Eval.	Excav.	WB. 20/7/2010- 15/9/2010	Other		
Sponsor/Client	Portsmouth City Council					
Project Manager	Andy Leonard					
Project Supervisor	Sarah Porteus					
Period Summary	Palaeo.	Meso.	Neo.	BA	IA	RB
	AS	MED	PM <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Other Modern		
100 Word Summary						
<p>An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Archaeology South-East on behalf of Portsmouth City Council during works associated with the new Trafalgar Gate link road. A small number of footings associated with 19th century buildings were identified though significant destruction of the structures had occurred through bomb damage, grubbing out and modern construction and service works. No evidence was recovered of any activity prior to the 19th century.</p>						

OASIS Form

OASIS ID: archaeol6-105306

Project details

Project name	Trafalgar Gate, Portsmouth, Watching Brief
Short description of the project	An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Archaeology South-East on behalf of Portsmouth City Council during works associated with the new Trafalgar Gate link road. A small number of footings associated with 19th century buildings were identified though significant destruction of the structures had occurred through bomb damage, grubbing out and modern construction and service works. No evidence was recovered of any activity prior to the 19th century.
Project dates	Start: 20-07-2010 End: 15-09-2010
Previous/future work	No / No
Any associated project reference codes	TGP10 - Sitecode
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	None
Current Land use	Other 3 - Built over
Monument type	TERRACE HOUSE Post Medieval
Significant Finds	NONE None
Investigation type	'Watching Brief'
Prompt	Planning condition
Project location	
Country	England
Site location	HAMPSHIRE PORTSMOUTH PORTSMOUTH Trafalgar Gate
Postcode	P01 4QT
Study area	2.00 Kilometres
Site coordinates	SU 6428 0134 50.8074794331 -1.087608710570 50 48 26 N 001 05 15 W Point
Project creators	
Name of Organisation	Archaeology South-East
Project brief originator	Archaeology South-East
Project design originator	Portsmouth City Council
Project director/manager	Andy Leonard
Project supervisor	Sarah Porteus

Type of sponsor/funding body	Portsmouth City Council
Project archives	
Physical Archive recipient	Portsmouth City Council
Physical Archive ID	Accession:2010/311
Physical Contents	'Ceramics'
Digital Archive recipient	Portsmouth City Council
Digital Archive ID	Accession:2010/311
Digital Contents	'none'
Digital Media available	'Images raster / digital photography'
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Paper Archive ID	Accession:2010/311
Paper Contents	'none'
Paper Media available	'Context sheet', 'Report', 'Unpublished Text'
Project bibliography	
1	
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