

**Archaeological Watching Brief at
Portsmouth Road, Fishbourne, West Sussex**

Chichester: FB/208/08

NGR 483498 104695 – 483621 104669

**Project no. 3114
Site Code: PRF 07**

**ASE Report No. 2008161
Oasis ID: archaeol6- 48573**

Deon Whittaker

September 2008

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Abstract

Archaeology South-East were commissioned by 4 Delivery Ltd., on behalf of their client, to undertake an archaeological watching brief at the Old Portsmouth Road Site, Fishbourne, Chichester. The site is centred on NGR 483483 104822. Excavation of an approximately 40m long service trench and an area 25 m x 3m to natural deposits revealed no archaeological horizons. A further 45m x 15m area was topsoil stripped, again revealing no archaeological remains. Natural, possibly truncated deposits, formed of alluvium and Reading Beds clay underlay modern road surfaces and services. Surface deposits consisted of mixed modern construction materials and various re-deposited materials. No archaeological remains were observed except a late 19th- and 20th-century barrel-vaulted brick drain on the A259 Fishbourne Road.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Background

1.1.1 Archaeology South-East (ASE), the contracting division of the Centre for Applied Archaeology at the University College London Institute of Archaeology, were commissioned by 4 Delivery Limited, on behalf of their client, to undertake an archaeological watching brief during groundworks required for the installation of a new sewer pipe at Salthill Road and Old Portsmouth Road, Fishbourne, henceforth known as 'the site'. The site runs between National Grid Reference (NGR) 483498 104695 and 483621 104669 and its location is shown in Figure 1. The work was carried out between the 18th February 2008 and 10th June 2008 by Simon Stevens (Senior Archaeologist), Deon Whittaker, Kathy Grant, Sarah Porteus and Andy Margetts (Archaeologists).

1.2 Geology and Topography

1.2.1 According to the British Geological Survey Sheet 317 Solid and Drift Edition, the site lies on Reading Beds overlying Valley Gravels.

1.3 Planning Background

1.3.1 Planning permission was not required but as part of 4 Delivery's commitment to the local heritage and environment, the Chichester District Archaeologist (Chichester District Council – CDC) was consulted. Due to the close proximity of Fishbourne Roman Palace, c.200m distant, it was suggested that an archaeological watching brief be undertaken.

1.4 Aims and Objectives

1.4.1 The general aim of the archaeological work was ensure that any features, artefacts or ecofacts of archaeological interest that would be affected by the proposed groundworks were recorded and interpreted to appropriate standards.

1.4.2 The ground works monitored were:

- Topsoil stripping for a temporary site compound
- Excavation of sewage trenches on the A295 and Salthill Road

1.5 Scope of Report

1.5.1 The purpose of this report is to describe the site and the work undertaken, giving sufficient stratigraphic information to adequately understand any likely impact of the ground works on any archaeological deposits that may be within the site boundaries.

2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The archaeology of the immediate vicinity is dominated by the presence of Fishbourne Roman Palace, however, there is support for wider archaeological importance as summarised below.
- 2.1.1 Palaeolithic findspots are uncommon this close to the south coast, with one findspot between one and two kms to the south east. Approximately 3-4km to the north are the clifflines of the Brighton-Norton and the Goodwood-Slindon raised beaches from which more dense scatters of findspots are known (Pope 2003: p24).
- 2.1.2 The Mesolithic period is poorly represented in the immediate vicinity of the site. Early Mesolithic findspots exist 2-3km to the south east and north east. A Late Mesolithic findspot is recorded within 1km to the north west of the site (Holgate 2003: pp35 -36).
- 2.1.3 Neolithic findspots are recorded within 1-2km to both the east and west (Drewett 2003: p39), with a scatter of probable Early Neolithic worked flint from Nutbourne (TQ 78715 06895) about 2km to the west (Butler 2007: p10).
- 2.1.4 Of later prehistoric periods the Bronze Age is most sparsely represented with a concentration of Bronze Age activity known from Bow Hill, some 5 kilometres to the north. A Late Bronze Age / Early Iron Age site is recorded approximately 2km to the north west at Knapp Farm and Middle Iron Age deposits are recorded from Oldplace Farm 2-3km to the north east (Hamilton 2003). Late Iron Age / Pre-Roman evidence is most strongly represented by the early settlement phases at Fishbourne Palace together with entrenchments stretching from Fishbourne to Chichester (Davenport 2003: p101).
- 2.1.5 The villa of Fishbourne Palace provides evidence for Roman settlement in the area. A further villa is known to have existed in the vicinity of the site just north of the Roman town of Chichester (Rudling 2003: p112). The A259 is allegedly the route of a Roman road (Margary 1955, Road 421).
- 2.1.6 Settlements from the medieval period include a pre-Conquest church and hospital c.2km to the east. Four medieval moated sites exist in a band stretching from within 1 kilometre to the north east of the site to 2km to the west (Taylor 2003: p161).

3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

- 3.1 On initial inspection, by Simon Stevens on the 18th February 2008, the site, for the most part, consisted of a tarmac road through a developed area with a layer of construction deposits associated both with the road construction and service provision. Although there had been a significant degree of modern deposits and construction traffic, there was still potential for preserved archaeological remains.
- 3.2 New ground work excavations undertaken by contractors were monitored by the archaeologist until it became clear beyond reasonable doubt that no archaeological remains were present (i.e. once excavation reached undisturbed natural subsoils). This occurred early on in the watching brief programme which extended from the junction of Salthill Road and the A259 (Fishbourne / Old Portsmouth Road) and Beaver Close (Figure 2). It was subsequently agreed to proceed with an intermittent watching brief, by arrangement with the County Archaeologist and the client. This was particularly appropriate given that a large proportion of the Salthill Road sewer pipeline would occupy the same line as the pre-existing sewer, although the new one would be slightly wider by 600mm.
- 3.3 A machine fitted with a 900mm wide bucket was used for the excavation of a 3m x 0.9m trench on the A259 junction with Salthill Road (A2, Figure 2). To the north a service trench was dug in the same manner, approximately 40m long and 2m deep (A3, Figure 2). A machine fitted with a 1.8m toothless bucket was used to excavate a further 25 x 3m area (A1, Figure 2) and a 42m x 15m compound to the west of Salthill Road (A4, Figure 2)
- 3.4 The CDC Archaeologist was kept informed of progress as necessary and made the decision regarding the best way to proceed given the nature of the stratigraphy as discussed below.
- 3.5 Although no archaeological remains were observed, the site was recorded on the available maps. A photographic record was made in digital format and a drawn record was made of deposits encountered.
- 3.6 All work was carried out in accordance with the Recommended Standard Conditions for Archaeological Fieldwork, Recording, and Post-Excavation Work (Development Control) (*WSCC 2007*).
- 3.7 Table 1: Quantification of Site Archive

Number of Contexts	16
No. of files/paper record	1
Plan and sections sheets	0
Bulk Samples	0
Photographs	1
Bulk finds	0
Registered finds	0
Environmental flots/residue	0

4.0 RESULTS

4.1 Recorded Contexts for A259 (A1, Figure 2)

4.1.1 Area A1 consisted of an east-west oriented 25m x 3m strip to the immediate south of the A259 Fishbourne Road, just to the east of the junction with Salthill Road. Along the southern edge of A1 was a 1m wide service trench. Perpendicular and attached to this trench, running north-south bisecting the area A1, was a 500mm wide service trench with a manhole. This area was excavated to a depth of 700mm with the contexts recorded as follows:

4.1.2 Table 2: List of Recorded Contexts, A259.

Context	Type	Description	Max. Length	Max. Width	Max. Depth
A1/001	Deposit	Mixed	25m	3m	600mm
A1/002	Deposit	Deposit	25m	3m	100mm @ LoE

4.1.3 In summary, area A1 consisted of 100mm (at LoE) of mid-brownish yellow, sandy clay [A1/002], which may form the natural Reading Beds. Above this lay 600mm of mid-brownish grey mixed deposits with occasional to frequent inclusions, recorded as 'made ground' with no archaeological remains recorded.

4.2 Recorded Contexts for Junction of A259 & Salthill Road (A2, Figure 2)

4.2.1 A2 consisted of a 6m trench running north-south across the A259 at the junction with Salthill Road, connecting services on the A259 to those projected along the Salthill Road. This trench cut into a pre-existing service trench as did much of the subsequent work, which led to the decision to maintain an intermittent watching brief. The contexts recorded were as follows:

4.2.2 Table 3: List of Recorded Contexts, Junction of A259 and Salthill Road

Context	Type	Description	Max. Length	Max. Width	Max. Depth
A2/001	Deposit	Tarmac	6m	500mm	400mm
A2/002	Deposit	Type1 gravel	6m	500mm	600mm @ LoE

4.2.3 In summary, the natural was not reached at intervention depth due to the pre-existing service trench and no archaeological remains were observed.

4.3 Recorded Contexts for Salthill Road (Area A3, Figure 2)

4.3.1 A3 consisted of a 37m trench running along the axis of Salthill road connecting trench A2 on the A259 to the sewer main at the north end of trench A3. The Salthill road service trench would run for approximately 37m before rejoining pre-existing services. This area was observed on an intermittent basis and the contexts recorded were as follows:

4.3.2 Table 4: List of Recorded Contexts for Salthill Road

Context	Type	Description	Max. Length @LoE	Max. Width @LoE	Max. Depth
A3/001	Deposit	Concrete	3m	0.9m	100mm
A3/002	Deposit	Gravel mixed	3m	0.9m	200mm
A3/003	Deposit	Gravel mixed	3m	0.9m	700mm
A3/004	Deposit	Clay	1.5m	0.9m	500mm
A3/005	Structure	Brick Drain?	-	750mm at LoE	500mm
A3/006	Cut	for A3/005	-	-	-
A3/007	Deposit	Sandy Clay	1.5m	-	500mm
A3/008	Deposit	Tarmac	37m	0.9m	150mm
A3/009	Deposit	Made Ground	37m	0.9m	300mm
A3/010	Deposit	Mixed	30m	0.9m	50mm
A3/011	Deposit	Mixed	30m	0.9m	120mm
A3/012	Deposit	Clay	37m	0.9m	1.5m

4.3.3 In summary the contexts for Salthill Road are divided into two discreet blocks, viewed during two separate periods of observation.

1) During the first visit, a 3m long north - south trench was observed. In the northern half of the trench was deposit [A3/007]: a brownish yellow, sand clay, possibly natural, horizontally truncated by cut [A3/006]. This was a near vertical cut with the base below the limit of excavation.

Above [A3/007] was a dilapidated brick structure [A3/005], possibly a drain, probably originally barrel vaulted. To the side of [A3/007] and at approximately the same elevation was deposit [A3/004], a 500mm deep (at LoE) deposit of whitish grey, clay, presumably the fill of [A3/006]. The relationship of [A3/005] to [A3/004] is not certain. What is certain is that [A3/003], a deposit of whitish grey, mix of gravel and concrete, sealed both [A3/005] and [A3/004].

Above [A3/003] lay [A3/002], a 200mm thick, mixed deposit of grey gravel and concrete. This was sealed by [A3/001], a 100mm thick deposit of concrete.

2) During the second period of observation a 37m section of trench was intermittently attended and recorded. Contexts [A3/008-12] were described as follows:

[A3/012] was a red, mottled grey, clay friable to firm without inclusions, 1.5m deep at the LoE and overlain by a sequence of re-deposits beginning with [A3/011] which consisted of a 150mm thick deposit of red clay with cbm. [A3/011] was overlain by [A3/010], a 50mm deep, mixed deposit of red and grey clay with cbm, rubble and gravel. [A3/010] was in turn, overlain by [A3/009], a 300mm thick deposit of cbm, gravel and concrete, upon which was laid a 150mm thick tarmac deposit [A3/008].

[A3/011] and [A3/010] were not present in the northern-most 7m of the trench. No archaeological remains were recorded.

4.4 Recorded Contexts for Compound (A4, Figure 2)

4.4.1 The topsoil stripping for the contractor's compound was undertaken with a machine using a 1.8m toothless bucket. The area stripped and recorded initially was a 42m x 15m area, with the south west corner of c.18 sq metres left undisturbed. This corner took the form of an equilateral triangle with two sides of 6m length, which was stripped under archaeological observation at a later date, with the contexts recorded as follows:

4.4.2 Table 5: List of Recorded Contexts in Compound (A4, Figure 2)

Context	Type	Description	Max. Length	Max. Width	Max. Depth
A4/001	Deposit	Clayey Silt	42m	15m	200mm
A4/002	Deposit	Silty Clay	42m	15m	600mm @ LoE

4.4.3 In summary, [A4/002] was an exposed surface consisting of brownish yellow silty clay, overlain by [A4/001], a mid-light brown, clayey silt, with occasional inclusions of natural flint fragments, oyster shell and modern tile. Extensive bioturbation was also noted.

5.0 THE FINDS and ENVIRONMENTAL SAMPLES

5.1 No finds were recovered and no deposits suitable for environmental samples were observed.

6.0 DISCUSSION and CONCLUSIONS

6.1 The ground surface of the site is comparatively flat; however, the proximity of the River Lavant to the east may have influenced both the topography and the deposits recorded. Natural alluvial deposits appear only to survive as [A1/002] south of the A259 and as [A4/004], the silty clay deposit from the compound (see Table 5). In addition, deposit [A3/007], beneath the brick structure [A3/005], may be a layer of natural alluvium, not otherwise present in trench A3. The general absence of alluvium from this trench may be accounted by the degree of truncation caused by the various made ground deposits laid directly upon the natural clay [A3/012].

6.2 Whilst the potential for archaeological remains exists from the [A1/002], [A3/004] and [A3/007] deposits, the Salthill Road excavation revealed that any archaeological horizons have already been heavily truncated by prior development. Although no archaeological features or artefacts were recovered, undisturbed subsoils, with the potential for bearing archaeological remains, exist in the compound area (A4, Figure 2) which are as yet undisturbed and unexcavated.

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SMR Summary Form

Site Code	PRF07					
Identification Name and Address	Old Portsmouth Road, Fishbourne, West Sussex					
County, District &/or Borough	Fishbourne, Chichester, West Sussex					
OS Grid Refs.	NGR 483483 104822					
Geology	Reading Beds - Clay and Drift Alluvium					
Arch. South-East Project Number	3114					
Type of Fieldwork	Eval.	Excav.	Watching Brief ✓	Standing Structure	Survey	Other
Type of Site	Green Field ✓	Shallow Urban ✓	Deep Urban	Other		
Dates of Fieldwork	Eval.	Excav.	WB. 18-1 08 - 10- 6 08	Other		
Sponsor/Client	4 Delivery Ltd					
Project Manager	Diccon Hart					
Project Supervisor	Deon Whittaker					
Period Summary	Palaeo.	Meso.	Neo.	BA	IA	RB
	AS	MED	PM	Other Modern ✓		
<p>100 Word Summary.</p> <p><i>Archaeology South-East were commissioned by 4 Delivery Ltd., on behalf of their client, to undertake an archaeological watching brief at the Old Portsmouth Road Site, Fishbourne nr. Chichester. The site is centred on NGR 483483 104822. Excavation of an approximately 40m long service trench and an area 25 m x 3m to natural deposits revealed no archaeological horizons. A further 45m x 15m area was topsoil stripped, again revealing no archaeological remains. Natural, possibly truncated deposits, formed of alluvium and Reading Beds clay underlay modern road surfaces and services. Surface deposits consisted of mixed modern construction materials and various redeposited materials. No archaeological remains were observed except a late 19th- and 20th-century barrel-vaulted brick drain on the A259 Fishbourne Road.</i></p>						

OASIS Form

OASIS ID: archaeol6-48573

Project details

Project name	Old Portsmouth Road Fishbourne
Short description of the project	Archaeology South-East were commissioned by 4 Delivery Ltd., on behalf of their client, to undertake an archaeological watching brief at the Old Portsmouth Road Site, Fishbourne nr. Chichester. The site is centred on NGR 483483 104822. Excavation of an approximately 40m long service trench and an area 25 m x 3m to natural deposits revealed no archaeological horizons. A further 45m x 15m area was topsoil stripped, again revealing no archaeological remains. Natural, possibly truncated deposits, formed of drift alluvium and Reading Beds clay underlay modern road surfaces and services. Surface deposits consisted of mixed modern construction materials and various redeposited materials. No archaeological remains were observed except a late 19th- and 20th-century barrel-vaulted brick drain on the A259 Fishbourne Road.
Project dates	Start: 18-02-2008 End: 10-06-2008
Previous/future work	Not known / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	PRF07 - Sitecode
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	None
Current Land use	Residential 1 - General Residential
Monument type	None
Significant Finds	None
Investigation type	'Watching Brief'
Prompt	Voluntary/self-interest

Project location

Country	England
Site location	WEST SUSSEX CHICHESTER FISHBOURNE Old Portsmouth Road
Postcode	PO19 3 XX
Study area	1000.00 Square metres
Site coordinates	TQ 83498 04695 50.8120800901 0.604991577511 50 48 43 N 000 36 17 E Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 0m Max: 0.10m

Project creators

Name of Organisation Archaeology South East

Project brief originator Archaeology South-East

Project design originator Archaeology South-East

Project director/manager Diccon Hart

Project supervisor Deon Whittaker

Type of sponsor/funding body Developer

Name of sponsor/funding body 4 delivery

Project archives

Physical Archive Exists? No

Digital Archive recipient Local Museum

Digital Contents 'Stratigraphic'

Digital Media available 'Images raster / digital photography'

Paper Archive recipient Local Museum

Paper Contents 'Stratigraphic'

Paper Media available 'Context sheet','Section','Unpublished Text'

Project bibliography

1

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Other bibliographic details 2008161

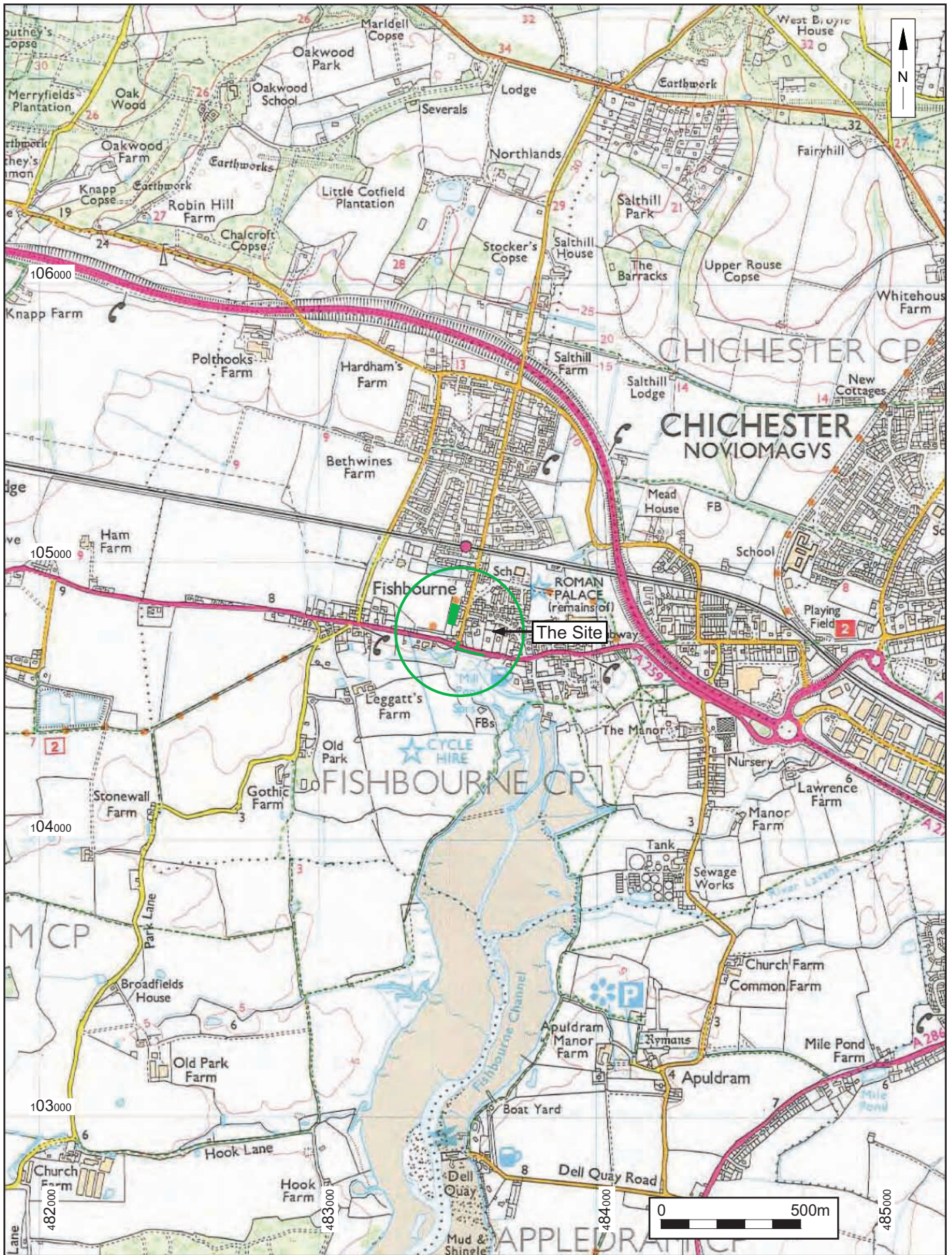
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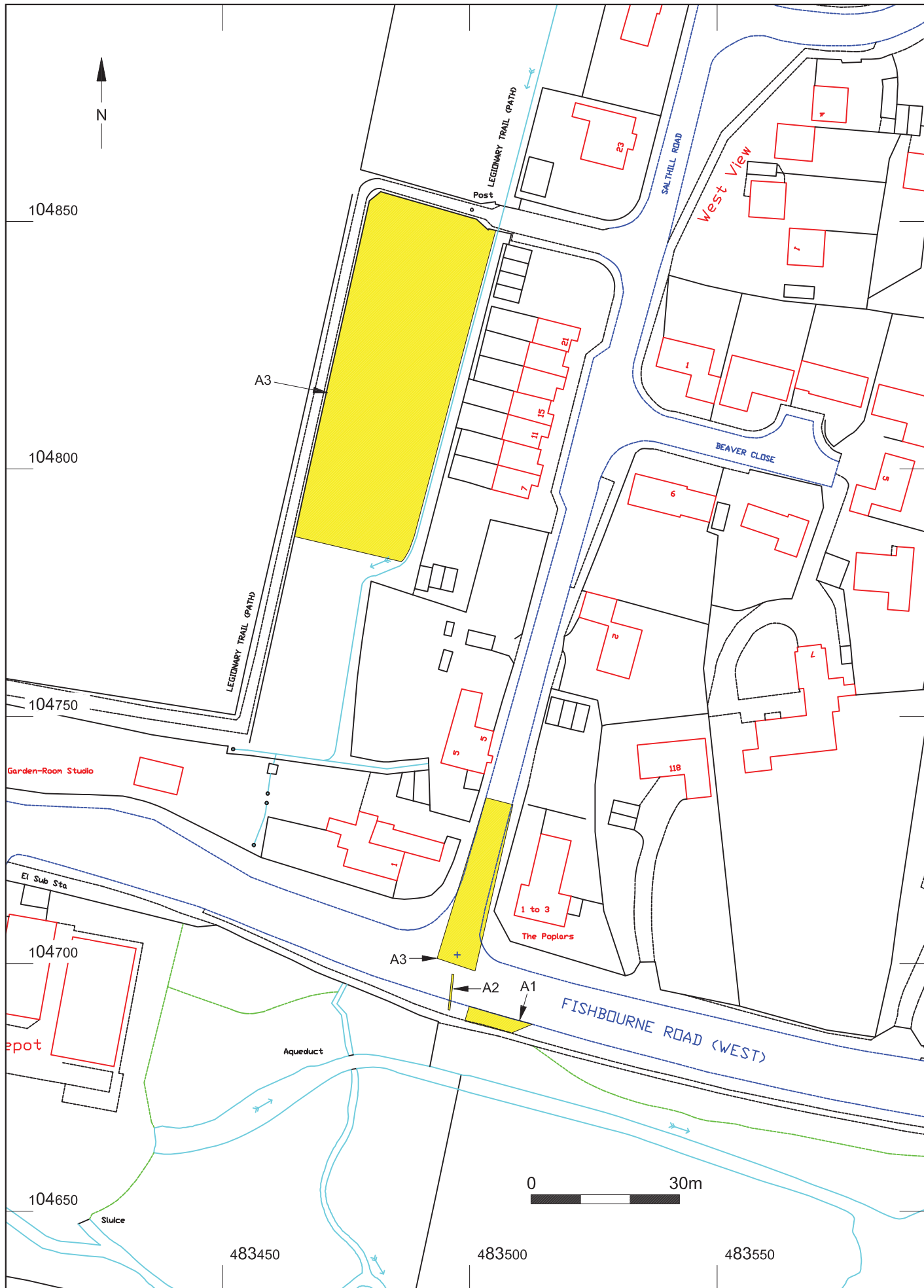
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Entered on 19 September 2008



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Project Ref: 3114	October 2008	Site Location Plan	
Report Ref: 2008161	Drawn by: DJH		

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Project Ref: 3114	October 2008	Site Plan		
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