

**74 Mount Pleasant Road,
Alton, Hampshire**

**An Archaeological Evaluation
for Fleet Homes 2000 Ltd**

by Sean Wallis

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code MPR 07/91

August 2007

Summary

Site name: 74 Mount Pleasant Road, Alton, Hampshire

Grid reference: SU 7177 3884

Site activity: Archaeological Field Evaluation

Date and duration of project: 1st – 3rd August 2007

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Sean Wallis

Site code: MPR 07/91

Area of site: c. 0.15ha

Summary of results: No archaeological deposits were identified relating to the neighbouring Saxon cemetery. Several pieces of post-medieval pottery and three pieces of medieval pottery were retrieved from the topsoil.

Monuments identified: None

Location and reference of archive: The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with Hampshire Museum Service in due course.

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Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford✓ 11.08.07 Steve Preston✓ 14.08.07
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74 Mount Pleasant Road, Alton, Hampshire An Archaeological Evaluation

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Report 07/91

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out at 74 Mount Pleasant Road, Alton, Hampshire (SU 7177 3884) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Jason Leete of Peter Leete and Partners, Estate Agents, The Green, Headley Road, Grayshott, Hindhead, Surrey, GU26 6LG, on behalf of Fleet Homes 2000 Ltd, 6 Kings Road, Fleet, Hampshire, GU51 3AD.

A planning application is to be made to East Hampshire District Council for the construction of four new houses on the site, following demolition of the existing structures. The proposed new buildings are to occupy much of the same area as the existing buildings. Mr Stephen Appleby of Hampshire County Council, archaeological adviser to the District Council, has requested an archaeological evaluation of the site, in order to inform the planning process.

This is in accordance with the Department of the Environment's Planning Policy Guidance, *Archaeology and Planning* (PPG16 1990), and the District Council's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr Stephen Appleby of Hampshire County Council. The fieldwork was undertaken by David Platt and Sean Wallis between 1st and 3rd August 2007, and the site code is MPR 07/91. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with Hampshire Museum Service in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located on the south side of Mount Pleasant Road, approximately 400m south of the historical core of Alton. The site is bounded to the north-west by the London to Winchester railway line, which here passes through a very steep cutting. It is bounded to the east and south by residential properties (Fig. 2). The site is currently occupied by two bungalows, a double garage, and a number of sheds and greenhouses. The remainder of the site is currently used as a garden, with fruit trees, raised vegetable beds, and lawn areas. The site slopes up quite steeply from west to east, from c. 122m to 125m above Ordnance Datum. According to the British Geological Survey the underlying geology consists of Middle Chalk deposits (BGS 1990), and this was confirmed in all four trenches.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site has been highlighted in correspondence from Mr Appleby, and subsequent consultation of the Hampshire Sites and Monuments Record. In summary, the site lies relatively close to (approximately 50m west of the recorded centre point of) an early/middle Saxon cemetery, which was partially excavated in the 1960s (Evison 1988). The cemetery comprised both inhumation and cremation burials, and at least 147 individuals were recorded. The burials were furnished with a variety of grave goods, sometimes elaborately so. The cemetery is regarded as being of national importance due to the richness of the grave goods, which included items of imported metalwork. A small number of Roman finds (coins, pottery) were also recorded. From the archaeological work carried out in the 1960s it seems highly likely that the cemetery extends westwards down the hill, and that further burials or associated deposits of similar date may be present in adjacent areas including the proposed development area.

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the evaluation was to determine the presence/absence, extent, condition, character, quality and date of any archaeological deposits within the area of development. This work was to be carried out in a manner which would not compromise the integrity of archaeological features or deposits which might warrant preservation *in situ*, or might be better excavated under conditions pertaining to full excavation

The specific research aims of the project were;

To determine if archaeologically relevant levels have survived on the site.

To determine if archaeological deposits of any period are present.

To determine if archaeological deposits and finds representing further Saxon burial remains are present on the site.

It was proposed to dig two trenches, each 1.5m wide and 8m long. These were to be located within those parts of the footprint of the proposed new houses which were accessible, adjacent to the existing buildings. A contingency for the equivalent of an additional 5 sq m of trenching was included within the proposal, should this be required to clarify any deposits found in the initial trenching. Due to the presence of lawn areas and raised vegetable beds, the trenches were sub-divided and located in those areas of the garden which had recently been cleared of vegetables. These changes were discussed and agreed with Mr Appleby.

A complete list of trenches giving lengths, breadths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1.

Results

Due to the access constraints of the site, all trenches were dug by hand (Fig. 3). The stratigraphy observed in each trench was similar, consisting of topsoil, over subsoil, onto natural chalk. Fragments of brick, tile, animal bone, glass, clay pipe, oyster shell and iron were noted within the topsoil and subsoil deposits, but were not retained. A total of 16 sherds of pottery were recovered from the topsoil and subsoil in all trenches. These were largely post medieval in date with 2 sherds of medieval pottery recovered from Trench 2 and one from Trench 4.

Trench 1 (Plate 1)

This trench was 6m long and aligned approximately E-W. Up to 0.2m of topsoil (50) was removed to reveal a deposit of mid brownish grey clayey silt subsoil (51), about 0.15m thick, which lay directly above the Middle Chalk natural geology. The chalk at the western end of the trench was quite smooth, and it is likely that this is associated with the terraced area immediately to the west of the trench. No archaeological features or deposits were recorded in this trench.

Trench 2

This trench was aligned approximately N-S, and was 4m long. About 0.3m of topsoil (50) was removed to reveal up to 0.1m of mid brownish grey clayey silt subsoil (51). This lay directly above the natural Middle Chalk. No archaeological deposits or features were noted.

Trench 3

Trench 3 was aligned approximately N-S, and was 4m long. Up to 0.3m of topsoil (50) lay above a deposit of mid brownish grey clayey silt subsoil (51), which was about 0.12m thick and lay directly above the natural Middle Chalk (Fig.4) . No archaeological deposits or features were observed.

Trench 4 (Plate 2)

This trench was 2m long and aligned approximately N-S. About 0.38m of topsoil (50) was removed to reveal a deposit of mid brownish grey clayey silt subsoil (51), up to 0.12m thick. The subsoil deposit lay directly above the Middle Chalk natural. No archaeological features or deposits were recorded.

Finds

Pottery by Paul Blinkhorn

The pottery assemblage comprised 16 sherds with a total weight of 101g. It comprised mainly post-medieval wares, although three small sherds of medieval material were also present. The following fabric types were noted:

Medieval Sandy Ware. 13th – 14th century? Moderate to dense sub-rounded white, pink and orange quartz up to 1mm. Rare sub-angular red ironstone of the same size. Occasional organic voids. Glazed and unglazed sherds noted. Glaze poor quality, patchy orange/green, internal and external. Probably of fairly local origin, some similarities with the products of the kilns at Bentley (Barton and Brears 1976). 2 sherds, 5g.

Kingston Ware (Pearce and Vince 1988). *c.* 1250–1450. White fabric with abundant, well sorted iron-stained, pink, white and clear quartz, sparse to moderate red and black ironstone. Mainly jugs with a rich copper-green glaze, often highly decorated with incised and applied decoration and iron-rich slip. 1 sherd, 5g.

Border wares. *c.* 1550-1700. White fabric, moderate rounded red quartz, iron stained to varying degrees, up to 0.25mm in size, with occasional grains up to 0.5mm. Sparse rounded red and black ironstone up to 0.25mm with sparse flecks of mica up to 0.1mm. The glazes on the vessels range from green, olive and yellow. Made in a wide range of utilitarian forms. Several known sources in Surrey. 2 sherds, 11g.

Post-medieval Red Earthenware. Mid 16th – 19th century? Fine ware with few visible inclusions. Range of utilitarian forms. 3 sherds, 25g.

Miscellaneous 19th century wares. Transfer-printed white china, horticultural earthenwares, etc. 8 sherds, 55g.

The pottery occurrence by number and weight of sherds per context by fabric type is shown in Appendix 2. The range of fabrics is typical of sites in the area. The medieval sherds were generally fairly small with some degree of abrasion, and appear typical of assemblages from cultivation horizons.

Conclusion

No archaeological features were recorded during the evaluation at 74 Mount Pleasant Road. Although it was not possible to excavate the trenches where originally planned, their eventual positioning did provide a good coverage of the site, despite the obvious limitation of the proposed development area being largely occupied by existing buildings and garden features.

This evaluation exercise has demonstrated that further burials from the known cemetery, or other archaeological deposits, are not dense nor widespread across the proposal site. However, due to the limitations of this (as for all sampling exercises) it is not possible to conclude that no further burial remains are present as these could occur in small numbers as discrete deposits.

References

- BGS, 1990, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50000, Sheet 300, Drift Edition, Keyworth
Barton, K J and Brears, P C D, 1976, 'A medieval pottery kiln at Bentley, Hampshire', *Proc Hampshire Fld Club Archaeol Soc* **32**, 71–5

Evison, V I, 1988, *An Anglo-Saxon Cemetery at Alton, Hampshire*, Hampshire Fld Club Archaeol Soc Monogr **4**
PPG16, 1990, *Archaeology and Planning*, Dept of the Environment Planning Policy Guidance 16, HMSO
Pearce, J, 1992, *Border Wares*, London
Pearce, J and Vince, A, 1988, *A Dated Type-Series of London Medieval Pottery. Part 4: Surrey Whitewares*,
London Middlesex Archaeol Soc Spec Pap **10**

APPENDIX 1: Trench details

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1	6.0	1.5	0.35	0-0.2m topsoil (50); 0.2-0.35m mid brownish grey clayey silt subsoil (51); 0.35m+ Middle Chalk natural geology. [Plate 1]
2	4.0	1.5	0.4	0-0.3m topsoil (50); 0.3-0.4m mid brownish grey clayey silt subsoil (51); 0.4m+ Middle Chalk natural geology.
3	4.0	1.5	0.42	0-0.3m topsoil (50); 0.3-0.42m mid brownish grey clayey silt subsoil (51); 0.42m+ Middle Chalk natural geology.
4	2.0	1.5	0.5	0-0.38m topsoil (50); 0.38-0.5m mid brownish grey clayey silt subsoil (51); 0.5m+ Middle Chalk natural geology. [Plate 2]

APPENDIX 2: Pottery occurrence by number and weight (in g) of sherds per context by fabric type.

<i>Tr</i>	<i>Cnxt</i>	<i>Med Sandy</i>		<i>Kingston</i>		<i>PMR</i>		<i>Border</i>		<i>19th C</i>	
		<i>No</i>	<i>Wt</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Wt</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Wt</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Wt</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Wt</i>
1	51									4	34
2	50			1	5	2	21			2	5
2	51	1	3			1	4	1	2		
3	50									1	3
3	51							1	9		
4	51	1	2							1	13
	Total	2	5	1	5	3	25	2	11	8	55

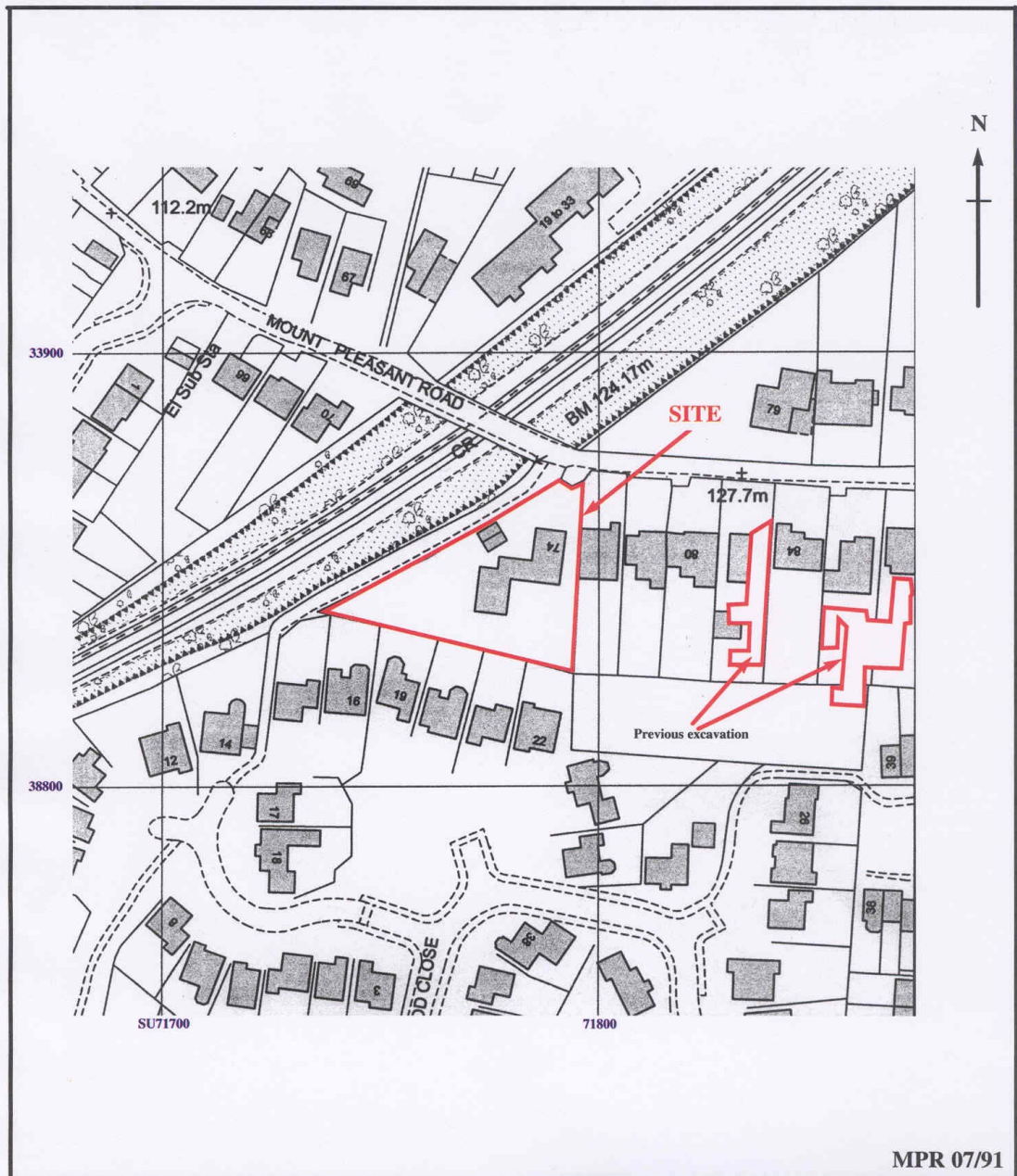


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Figure 1. Location of site within Alton and Hampshire.

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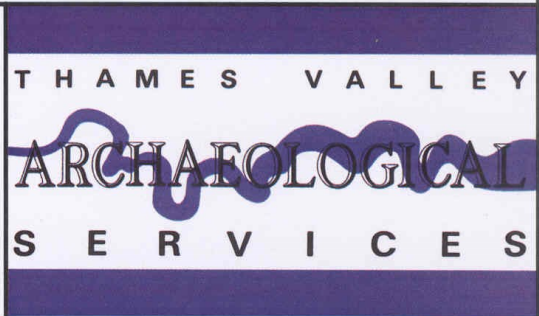


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Figure 2. Detailed location of site off Mount Pleasant Road.

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Figure 3. Location of trenches.

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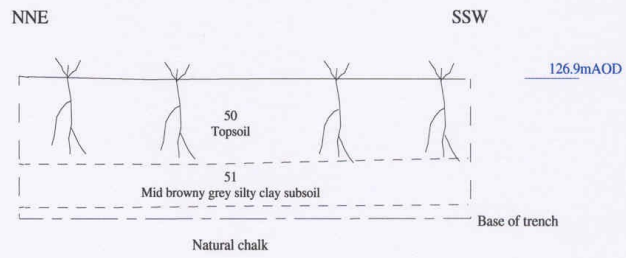


Figure 4. Representative section of Trench 3.

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Plate 1. Trench 1 looking east, horizontal scales 1m and 2m, vertical scale 0.5m.



Plate 2. Trench 4 looking south, horizontal scales 2m and 1m.