

# **10–12 Fishbourne Road East, Chichester, West Sussex**

**An Archaeological Watching Brief**

**For Croudace Homes Ltd**

by Andrew Munding

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code FRC 07/05

**September 2007**

## Summary

**Site name:** 10–12 Fishbourne Road East, Chichester, West Sussex

**Grid reference:** SU 8450 0467

**Site activity:** Watching Brief

**Date and duration of project:** 30th May – 13th July 2007

**Project manager:** Steve Ford

**Site supervisor:** David Platt

**Site code:** FRC 07/05

**Area of site:** c.0.35ha

**Summary of results:** A single ditch was encountered. A previous evaluation carried out on this site recorded another ditch. Both contained pottery dated to the early Roman period (c. AD50–100).

**Monuments identified:** Two 1st century Roman ditches.

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

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Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford✓ 24.09.07 Steve Preston✓ 24.09.07
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# **10-12 Fishbourne Road East, Chichester, West Sussex An Archaeological Watching Brief**

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**Report 07/05b**

## **Introduction**

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at 10–12 Fishbourne Road East, Chichester, West Sussex (SU 8450 0477) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Wayne Bew for Croudace Homes Ltd, Croudace House, Caterham, Surrey, CR3 6XQ.

Planning consent has been granted (app no. CC/06/02510/FUL) by Chichester District Council to construct 17 new dwellings and associated access and drainage on the site. An evaluation on the site (Taylor 2007) had shown the presence of Roman remains and therefore the consent was subject to a condition (4) relating to archaeology, in order to mitigate the effects of the development on any further remains present. This was to take the form of a watching brief during groundworks.

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 James Kenny, District Archaeological Officer with Chichester District Council. The fieldwork was undertaken by David Platt between 30th May and 13th July 2007. The site code is FRC 07/05.

The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at Chichester Museum in due course.

## **Location, topography and geology**

The site is located on the northern side of Fishbourne Road East and on the south-western margins of Chichester. The River Lavant flows c.1km to the south of the site (Fig. 1). Two properties previously occupied the ground but have been demolished since the evaluation and the site is bounded by further residential properties (Fig. 2). During the evaluation only the ground at No. 12 was available for trenching. The underlying geology comprised Valley Gravel (BGS 1957), which was observed in all trenches during the evaluation (Taylor 2007). The site lies at a height of 5.35m above Ordnance Datum.

## **Archaeological background**

The archaeological potential of the site comes from its location some 500m to the east of Fishbourne Palace, one of the most important Roman sites in the country. These remains have been Scheduled as an Ancient Monument (SAM 233). The area around the palace has produced other Roman finds and activity such as industrial areas, water supply area (an east-west aqueduct was recorded, with the projected line continuing across the proposal site), buildings which possibly serve the harbour, with remains and dumps of building material, coins and pottery found elsewhere (Rudling 2003). The site also lies on the route of the Roman road from Chichester to Bitterne (Margary's (1955) route 421). The evaluation of the site uncovered a 1st-century ditch, representing a former boundary feature (Taylor 2007). From the quantities of pottery and building material found in its fill it was thought that a structure could be present in the vicinity.

## **Objectives and methodology**

The purpose of the watching brief was to excavate and record any archaeological deposits which would be damaged or destroyed by the new groundworks, including areas of topsoil and subsoil stripping for the access road and foundation trenches. Any drainage trenching was to be viewed as appropriate.

## **Results**

The groundworks comprised two phases: the stripping of the access road which ran through the middle of the site; and the footings for the housing which was to stand to the west and east over the position of the previous dwellings. The stratigraphy over the site was dark brown silty clay topsoil overlaying a mid light yellowish grey subsoil. The entire access road strip was viewed and this provided the opportunity to examine an extensive area of the site (Fig. 3).

A ditch was recorded on an east-west alignment across the full width of the access road strip, which exposed 5.95m of its length. This ditch (2) was 0.65m wide and 0.13m deep, and underlay the subsoil, cutting the natural geology (Fig. 4). The fill (53) of this ditch was a dark brownish grey silty clay. Pottery and oyster shell were recovered from its fill. The majority of the feature was preserved *in situ*, as hardcore was to be laid over the top of this feature. Other than this no archaeology was seen on any other exposed part of the road strip.

For the remaining groundworks, access was limited. Most works either did not cut into the natural geology or took place in areas of deep truncation from construction and demolition from the previous structures. Only a small soakaway pit dug close to the main road in the south-western part of the site was viewed that exposed the

natural geology (Fig. 3). This pit was 2m square and excavated to 1m in depth. This uncovered no finds or archaeology instead uncovering undisturbed stratigraphy of 0.3m of topsoil overlying 0.35m of subsoil onto natural geology. Other drainage did not cut deep enough to disturb underlying deposits.

## **Finds**

### *Pottery by Malcolm Lyne*

All of the pottery from the evaluation and subsequent watching brief (26 sherds, 514g) comes from the fill of two ditches (1 and 2) and can be dated to c.AD.50-70. The assemblage was quantified by numbers of sherds and weights per fabric (Appendix 1). These fabrics were identified using a x8 magnification lens with inbuilt metric graticule for determining the natures, forms, sizes and frequencies of added inclusions. This small assemblage is similar in date to the much larger one encountered in the lower fill of the aqueduct immediately in front of the Palace (Lyne 2005), although a couple of both slightly earlier and later sherds are also present. One large tile fragment (190g) was also present in feature 2 along with three small fragments (3g) from feature 1.

### Fabrics

The codings for the following fabrics are those created for the recent Fishbourne Palace excavations (Lyne 2005) with additions:

- A1. Catalan Dressel 2-4 *amphora* fabric fired pink with up-to 3.00mm protruding white and pink quartz and feldspar grains, rock fragments and gold mica.
- C2A. Grey-black handmade fabric with profuse up to 1.50mm crushed calcined-flint filler. Rough but not lumpy.
- C10A. Rough grey/black handmade fabric with up to 0.20mm quartz and black ferrous inclusions.
- C10C. Coarser version with profuse up to 1.00mm white quartz, pale grog and black ferrous inclusions.
- C22. Miscellaneous coarsewares
- C23. East Sussex Ware
- F6. Soft wheel-turned cream fabric with sparse to moderate up-to 2.00mm irregular soft red and grey ferrous inclusions
- F8. Silt tempered wheel-turned grey fabric
- F31. Grey fired patchy pink/grey externally with profuse up to 0.10mm quartz filler

### *Shell by Steve Preston*

Ditch 2 produced two fragments of oyster (*ostrea edulis*) shell (54g), in good condition, possibly the top and bottom of the same specimen. The bottom section, more complete, had been pierced twice and had fractured around one of the piercings. A possible piercing was also noted on the top section but it had fragmented too much to make this certain. Oyster was a very frequently exploited food in Roman times. Shells were commonly pierced for threading to use as decoration, although evidence rarely survives due to the fragility of the raw material.

## Conclusion

The watching brief has revealed a second linear feature on the site, of similar 1st-century date to the linear feature found during the initial evaluation. The feature found during the evaluation was on a markedly different line to the projected course of the aqueduct and was considered to represent a field boundary feature. However, the linear feature found during the stripping of the access road is aligned east - west and could represent the line of the aqueduct. None of the artefacts recovered, however, provide positive evidence that this feature is an aqueduct as opposed to another field boundary.

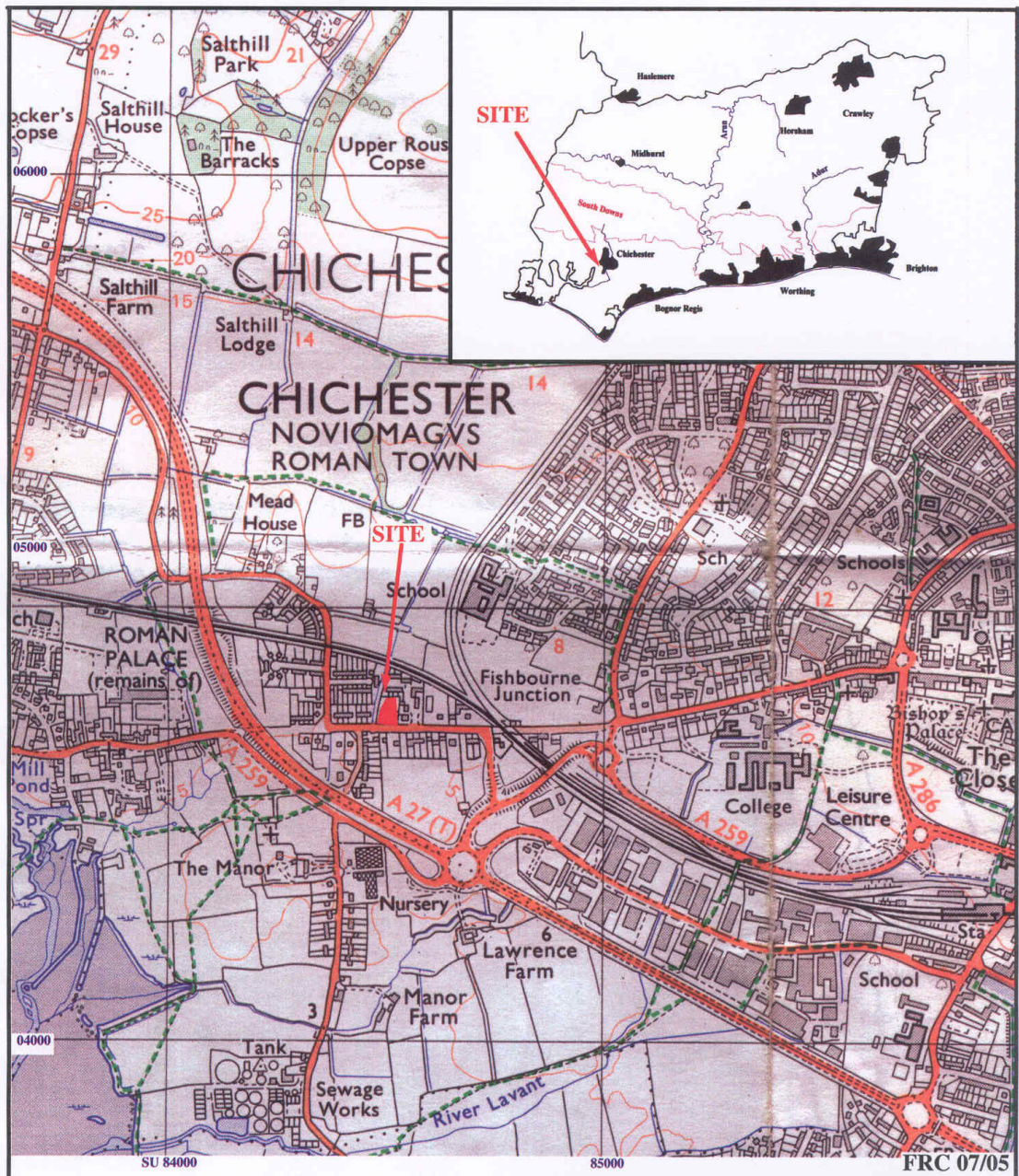
## References

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- Margary, I D, 1955, *Roman Roads in Britain*, London
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- Taylor, A, 2007, *10-12 Fishbourne Road East, Chichester, West Sussex: an archaeological evaluation*, Thames Valley Archaeological Services report 07/05a, Reading

## APPENDIX 1: Pottery catalogue

Area	Cut	Deposit	Type	Fabric	Form	Date-range	No.	Wt (g)	Comments
Tr 1	1	52	Ditch	C2A		Late Iron Age	1	4	
				C10A	F'bourne type 181.2	c.50-70	2	37	
				C10C	Jar	c.50-70	4	95	
				C22	F'bourne type 15	c.43-70	1	11	
				C22	misc		3	28	
				C23	Lid	L.I.A.-100	1	9	
				F6	RDBK beaker	c.50-80	1	12	
				F8	Beaker	c.50-150	1	6	
				F31	Closed forms	c.50-60	4	16	
				A1	Dr 2.4	c.50BC-AD.70	1	68	
Access Road	2	53	Ditch	C22	Necked jar	c.50-150	1	17	Fresh
				F8	F'bourne type 19	c.50-120	2	12	Fresh
				A1	Dr 2.4	c.50BC-AD.70	1	199	Fresh





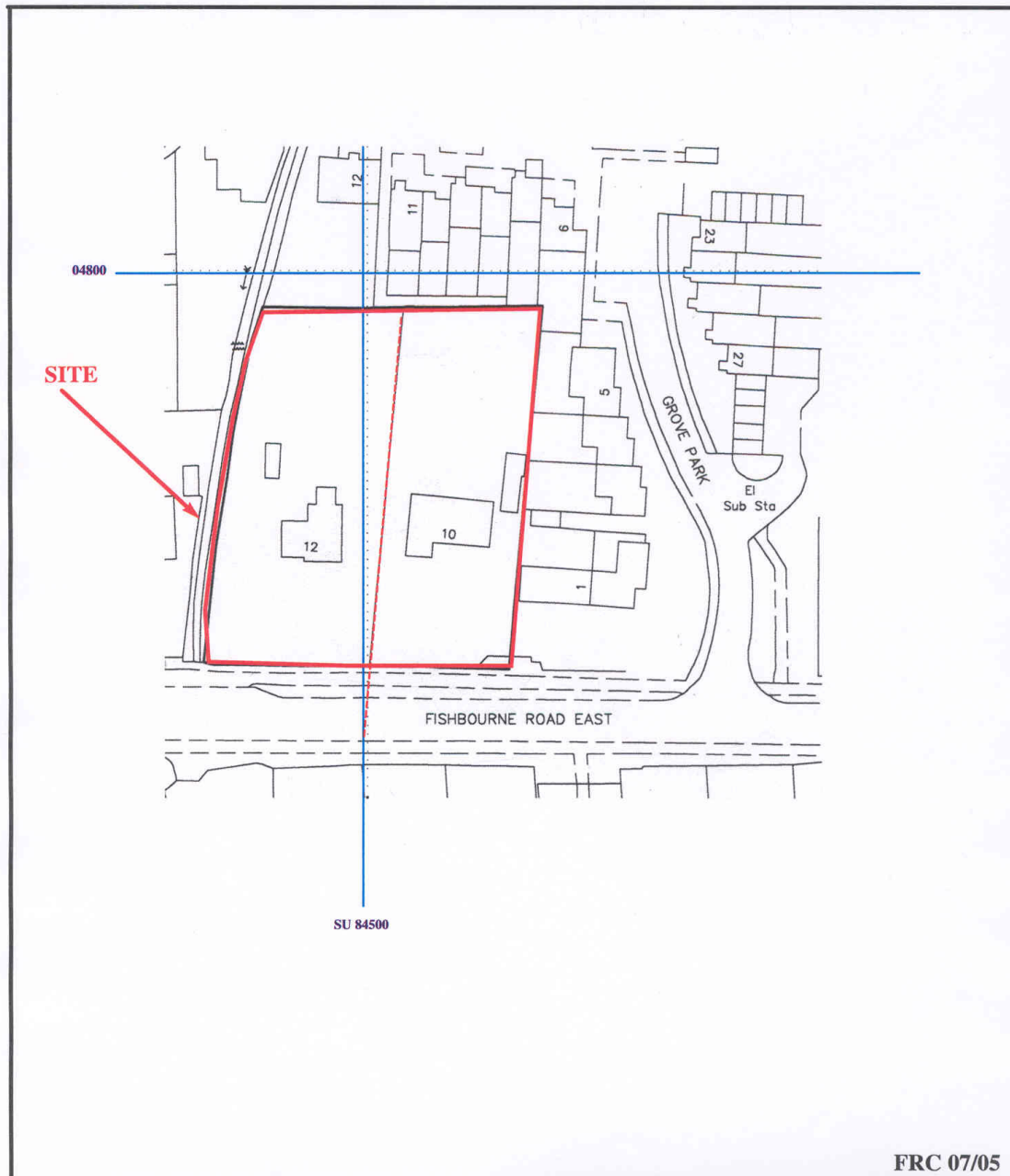
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Figure 1. Location of site within Chichester  
and West Sussex.

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Figure 2. Detailed location of site on Fishbourne  
Road East.

Scale: 1:1250

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Figure 3: Areas observed in watching brief with features highlighted; previous evaluation in grey

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Figure 4. Section.

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