

55-57 High Street, Fordingbridge, Hampshire:

Results of an archaeological watching brief

NGR 414726, 114145

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On behalf of:
Crownshade Ltd

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AC archaeology

55-57 HIGH STREET, FORDINGBRIDGE, HAMPSHIRE

Results of an archaeological Watching Brief

NGR 414726, 114145

Summary

Archaeological monitoring and recording was undertaken in July 2018 during groundworks associated with the construction of a new dwelling behind 55-57 High Street, Fordingbridge, Hampshire. While the development area lay within an area considered to be of archaeological interest, a sole feature of archaeological interest was recorded and consisted of a large pit-like feature believed to be a historic soakaway or waste pit. A small quantity of modern animal bone and later post-medieval/modern pottery were also recovered as a result of the site investigation.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This document sets out the results of an archaeological watching brief during groundworks to the rear of 55-57 High Street, Fordingbridge, Hampshire (centred on NGR 414726, 114145). The site location and development details are shown in Fig. 1.
- 1.2 The monitoring was undertaken by AC archaeology Ltd. and was commissioned by the applicant, Crownshade Ltd. in compliance with the requirements of the planning consent for the development granted by New Forest District Council (Ref. 15/11482).
- 1.3 The development works consists of the construction of a new dwelling situated in the central part of Fordingbridge on the south side of the High Street and approximately 30m east of the Market Place. The River Avon is located less than 100m to the southeast of the site.
- 1.4 The underlying solid geology comprises Poole Formation – Sand, Silt and Clay Sedimentary Bedrock formed approximately 41 to 56 million years ago. The superficial deposits consist of River Terrace, 4 – Sand and Gravel Superficial Deposits formed up to 3 million years ago.

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The properties fronting the High Street (Nos 55-57) are designated heritage assets in that they are Grade II Listed Buildings, which have recently been converted to three flats above ground floor shops. The buildings are believed to date to the mid-18th century and originally formed a town house, before being converted into shops in the mid-to late 19th century. The rear basement window is currently largely buried.
- 2.2 Although there are no recorded archaeological assets for the site itself or the surrounding area, the Hampshire Historic Environment Record (HHER) notes that Fordingbridge is included in Domesday (1086) as having a church and two mills. There is further documentary evidence for flax and fulling mills, as well as corn mills. A watching brief undertaken in 2012 at 22 High Street did not reveal any archaeological deposits.

2.3 It is very likely that settlement expanded along the High Street during the medieval and post-medieval periods. As the site area is approximately 30m east of the Market Place the site area had the potential for surviving archaeological deposits.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 The principal aims of the archaeological watching brief were;

- To record any archaeological features and finds which may be revealed or disturbed by the ground works for the new construction on the site, and;
- To provide an archive and interpretive report on the results of the monitoring.

3.2 The site investigation was undertaken in accordance with a written scheme of investigation approved by New Forest District Council (Clark 2018). Attendance by the site archaeologist was comprehensive: an archaeologist was *present during all relevant ground disturbance*.

3.3 The archaeological monitoring commenced with the excavation of building footings and lasted until such time as the site archaeologist was satisfied that no further exposure of archaeological deposits was possible.

3.4 Site observations were recorded using the standard AC archaeology Ltd. *pro forma* recording system, comprising written and graphic records and in accordance with AC archaeology's *General Site Recording Manual, Version 2*. A digital photographic record was also made.

3.5 The archive has been prepared using the unique site code ACW1084.

4. RESULTS

4.1 AC archaeology Ltd. staff attended the site on three consecutive occasions in July 2018. The programme of archaeological works comprised the observation of relevant groundworks during this period. The results are presented below. The stratigraphic sequence encountered during the fieldwork is listed and described in Table 1, while a photographic record is included as a series of plates at the end of the report.

Context Number	Description	Depth	Interpretation
100	Light grey-brown silty clay. Loose with common flint pebbles and occasional brick debris and CBM	0-400mm	Modern topsoil and building debris
101	Mottled, mid yellow-brown silty sand with abundant gravels	400mm +	Superficial geology

Table 1: The general stratigraphic sequence

4.2 Parts of the site had been previously disturbed by services, pipework and foundations of the former double garage. Prior to the commencement of the archaeological monitoring, the garage had been demolished and site levels reduced.

4.3 Archaeological monitoring commenced during the excavation of building footings for the new construction. The footings were excavated to 800mm in width and to a depth between 800mm

and 1.0m (see Plates 1 & 2). A sequence of topsoil mixed with building debris was noted overlying alluvial gravels.

- 4.4** In the north-central portion of the excavated footings a large pit-like feature was exposed in section. Feature F102 lay partially beneath the modern extension and was not fully exposed or revealed in plan (Plate 3). Due to the depth of excavation and the stability of the exposed (corner) of the abutting extension, it was not possible to enter the footing trench; however, a width of 2m and a depth of about 1.7m was recorded for the feature. Steep sided, it was filled with a moist dark, grey-brown, silty clay (103) which contained a quantity of late post-medieval and modern pottery, brick debris and animal bone that was noted but not retained. While unclear, it may once have functioned as a soakaway or a waste pit.
- 4.5** Further anomalies and disturbance to the natural substrata were noted during the site investigation. In particular, in the central portion a pit was visible along a single section; approximately 0.6m wide and 0.5m deep. However, this was situated in close proximity to a former toilet and associated pipe works and was not thought to have any archaeological significance.
- 4.6** Two sherds of late post-medieval/modern pottery were recovered from the topsoil during the site investigation with a collective weight of 24 grams. In addition, a quantity of animal bone was also recovered with a total weight of 219 grams.

5. THE FINDS by Kevin Trott & Royston Clark

Methodology

- 5.1** All finds from the site have been initially retained, cleaned where appropriate. Finds were then identified and subsequently quantified according to material type within the context, and all the data entered into a spreadsheet, forming part of the digital project archive.

Pottery

- 5.2** All finds comprise ceramic materials with bone dominating the overall finds assemblage. The pottery fabrics were initially sorted macroscopically, with inclusions being confirmed via light microscopy, at 20-30x magnification (as appropriate). Where possible, fabric types have been assigned a known origin i.e. Verwood and Bristol.
- 5.3** Verwood and Bristol pottery comprises the majority (100%) of the later post-medieval/Modern pottery assemblage. A total of 2 sherds, with a combined weight of 23 grams may be assigned to these dates. The small Verwood sherd (14g) derives from the base of an open vessel, with a basal circumference of c.70cm possibly deriving from an open panchion with the internal speckled yellow glaze of late 18th or early 19th century date. The second sherd derives from the rim/neck of a 19th century salt-glazed stoneware bottle (9g) with a rim diameter of 40mm. The source of this vessel may have been Bristol.
- 5.4** A date range from the late 18th – 19th century has been assigned to these sherds.

Animal Bone

- 5.5** A total of eleven animal bone fragments (219g) was recovered during the watching brief. These were found within the topsoil deposit and are therefore likely to be modern in date (100). Eight of the bones were identified as dog and consisted of near complete long-bones including two tibiae and a humerus, all from the same animal. Fragments of a scapula and radius were also recorded. The length of the tibiae (195mm) and the humerus (170mm) are indicative of quite a large dog.

Further dog bone includes two vertebrae and a skull fragment. There were also three unidentifiable bone fragments, which may have belonged to a different species, such as sheep / goat, but could equally be from the same dog.

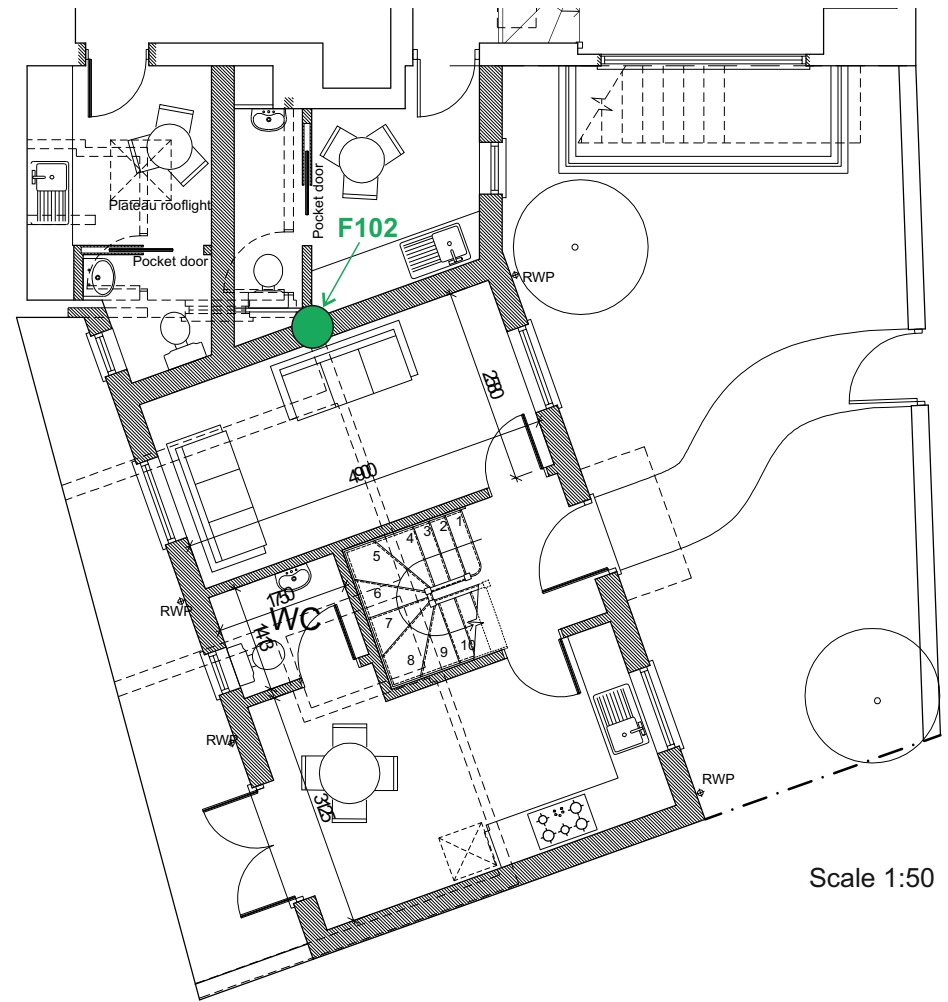
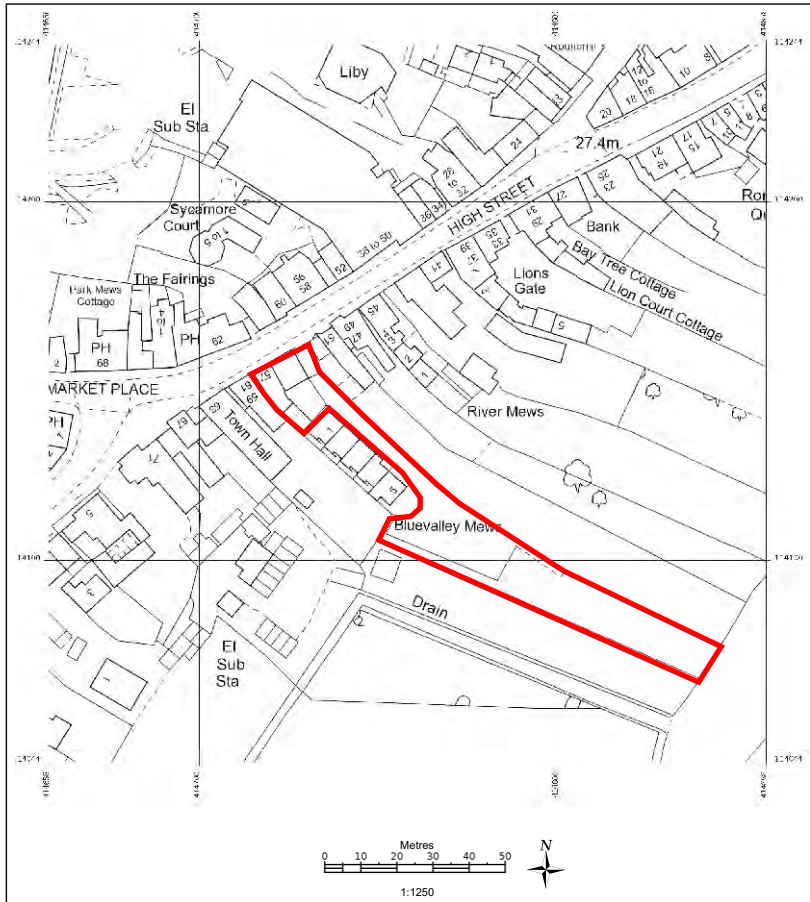
6. COMMENT

- 6.1** The archaeological watching brief has demonstrated a limited number of archaeological features and deposits surviving on the site, with a single pit-like feature recorded during the groundworks. This feature is of later post-medieval or modern origin. In addition, while disturbance was apparent across the site, there was no subsequent evidence for earlier building remains or settlement activity.

7. REFERENCES

BGS - British Geological Survey Online Viewer. Available from <http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>. Accessed January 2018.

Clark, R. 2018, *55-57 High Street, Fordingbridge, Hampshire. Written Scheme of Investigation for an archaeological watching brief*. AC archaeology Ltd. Document no. ACW1084/1/1.



Scale 1:50

Ground Floor Plan



PROJECT

55-57 High Street, Fordingbridge

TITLE

Fig. 1:
Location of site and archaeological feature noted

SELECTED PHOTOGRAPHIC PLATES



Plate 1: The site during excavation of building footings. View from the east. Scale 1m



Plate 2: General view of building footings. View from the northwest. Scale 1m



Plate 3: F102 in section with concrete platform of building above it. View from the south. Scale 1m



Plate 4: F102 with visible base. View from the southwest. Scale 1m

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