



Land at Canute Road and Royal Crescent Road, Southampton

Interim Evaluation Report



**Land at Canute Road and Royal Crescent Road,
Southampton**

Interim Evaluation Report

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Summary

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Kier Southern to carry out an archaeological evaluation of an 'L-shaped' c. 0.18 hectare area of land at the corner of Canute Road and Royal Crescent Road, Southampton centred at National Grid Reference 442700 111000 (hereafter 'the Site').

This document presents the interim results of the evaluation fieldwork undertaken between 2nd–4th July 2007, which forms the first stage of an archaeological programme attached to the planning condition. A more detailed, integrated report will be submitted after the completion of the watching brief, which forms the second stage of the archaeological works required.

A 120m² evaluation trench located in the western part of the Site was excavated. The evaluation recorded archaeological features predominantly in the south and the north-east corner of the trench and comprised a number of intercutting and discrete post-medieval pits of a 17th – 18th century date. These cut an earlier estuarine clay deposit which overlay the natural gravel. The pits contained very common finds for the period, including ceramic building material, oyster shell, as well as residual 14th – 15th centuries and 16th – 18th centuries pottery, animal bone, slate fragments and charcoal. The material represents the dumping of domestic waste in pits within an area of open ground or backyards of properties fronting any of the three roads surrounding the Site.

The remains of a brick-built cellar were recorded in the north-east corner of the trench. The structure is thought to have belonged to the Queen's Hotel public house which cartographic evidence shows to have been located on this part of the Site in recent times.

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Acknowledgements

The fieldwork was commissioned by Kier Southern, and the help of Tim Yeagle is gratefully acknowledged. Wessex Archaeology would also like to acknowledge the support and assistance of Alan Morton, Planning Archaeologist of Southampton City Council's Heritage Conservation Unit, who monitored the work on behalf of Southampton City Council.

The fieldwork was carried out by Jonathon Millward and Chris Ellis. This interim report of the evaluation was compiled by Chris Ellis. The illustrations were prepared by Elizabeth James. The project was managed on behalf of Wessex Archaeology by Brigitte Buss.

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Background

1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Kier Southern to carry out an archaeological evaluation and watching brief on an 'L-shaped', *c.* 0.18 hectare area of land at Canute Road and Royal Crescent Road, Southampton centred at National Grid Reference 442700 111000 (**Figure 1**) (hereafter referred to as 'the Site').

1.1.2 Planning permission (06/01707/FUL) has been granted for the redevelopment of the Site for the erection of a five to seven storey residential unit with an assumed basement depth of 3m below original ground levels (to about 0.5m aOD (above Ordnance Datum)). An archaeological condition for a staged programme of works has been attached to the planning consent.

1.1.3 The Site lies within a Local Area of Archaeological Importance as defined in Policy HE6 of the City of Southampton Local Plan, and a condition attached to the planning consent required the implementation of an archaeological programme of work. The evaluation fieldwork was designed to respond to said condition, and is based on specifications (internal reference number 6604) prepared by Southampton City Council's Heritage Conservation Unit (hereafter 'the Curator').

1.2 Scope of Document

1.2.1 This document presents the interim results of the evaluation fieldwork undertaken between 2nd–4th July 2007, which forms the first stage of the required archaeological programme of works. A more detailed, integrated report will be submitted after the completion of the watching brief, which forms the second stage.

2 THE SITE

2.1 Location and Topography

2.1.1 Information regarding the current setting of the Site has been included here from a geotechnical report provided by the Client (Structural Soils, 2007).

2.1.2 The development Site occupies a roughly L-shaped parcel of land of approximately 0.12 ha extent, bound by Albert Road to the north, Royal Crescent South to the west, and the rears of commercial properties along Canute Road to the south. The Site was most recently occupied by two warehouse units, a hotel and a sunken derelict area, all now demolished.

Ground floor level for the former buildings lies at around 3m aOD (**Figure 1**).

- 2.1.3 The Site is underlain by made ground, over superficial deposits in some areas, over River Terrace Gravels overlying Earnley Sands and Clays in others. The top of the Earnley Sands lies at about -2.0m aOD. The Site lies is situated the confluence of the rivers Itchen and Test, approximately 120m from the shore.

2.2 Archaeological and Historical Background

- 2.2.1 Information regarding the archaeological and historical background of the Site has been provided by the Curator, and is presented below.

2.2.2 Canute Road appears to have taken shape as a natural gravel spit, later augmented to form a sea defence, behind which salt marsh formed. The salt marsh was a considerable resource for the medieval and post-medieval town, being mainly used for pasture, but also housing a number of industries. For instance, the presence of saw pits in the eastern part of the salt marsh are noted in Court Leet presentments from 1604 onwards. A pond shown in at least part of the area of the Site on maps dating from 1771 and 1802 may have originated as a saw pit.

2.2.3 One feature that may have sat within the Site is a windmill, referred to in a Queen's College document of 1225 as standing "between the sea and the marsh". This is possibly the same site as a mill referred to in 1604 as having previously stood "on the old bulkwarks". Speed's map of 1611 shows what may have been the mound of an abandoned windmill. Comparison with the so-called Elizabethan map (probably dating to the second quarter of the 17th century) might suggest that the feature to the east of the Admiralty gallows lay close to what is not the crook in Canute Road.

3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

3.1 General - Evaluation

3.1.1 The overall aim of the archaeological programme is to twofold, namely evaluation with regard to the presence of any archaeological remains, followed by the implementation appropriate mitigation measures. To this aim, the archaeological programme is being staged as follows:

- Intrusive evaluation by trial trenching
- Appropriate mitigation of all remains identified (by record or by preservation *in situ*), subject to further agreement with the Curator and Client
- Watching Brief during main construction phase
- Post-excavation assessment and analysis of all remains recorded, subject to further agreement with the Curator and Client

- 3.1.2 For the purposes of this project, archaeologically significant remains and contexts have been defined by the Curator as those relating to pre-19th century human use of the area.

3.2 Specific - Evaluation

- 3.2.1 It was the specific objective of the intrusive trial trenching, in the first instance, to investigate the possible survival of the remains of a medieval windmill and saw pit suggested by cartographic evidence on the Site. A further objective was to collect basic information about the natural topography of the area and to inform any mitigation work as required on the basis of the findings and the Curator's subsequent instructions.

4 RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

- 4.1.1 A single trench (14.6 by 8.2m in extent) was machine excavated under continual archaeological supervision down to a level where archaeological features were recorded (at *c.* 1.8m depth).
- 4.1.2 A detailed description of all deposits and archaeological features recorded is tabulated in **Appendix 1**.

4.2 General deposit sequence

- 4.2.1 The Site is located at the city's edge and relatively close to the Southampton Water foreshore at the confluence of the rivers Itches and Test, and in keeping with this geographic location the stratigraphic sequence comprises mainly estuarine deposits overlaid by post-medieval waste deposits and modern demolition rubble.
- 4.2.2 At the base of the sequence was natural gravel, **118**, which was characterised by a fine, moderately well-sorted gravel of rounded chert pebbles in a light yellowish-brown silt matrix. This was overlaid by a maximum of 0.98m of estuarine clays **117** and **106**, of which **106** was gleyed suggesting deposition within water. Deposit **106** was characterised by a bluish-grey gleyed clay, with a yellowish tinge in places but otherwise sterile and homogeneous. This layer was cut by a number of post-medieval pits in the south of the trench.
- 4.2.3 Sealing all the archaeological features was an organic-rich deposit, **101**, which extended over most of the trench with the exception of the north-eastern corner. This was characterised by a 0.1m thick and very distinctive dark brown/black silty clay deposit containing abundant degraded plant remains. It probably represents the inundation of the Site as a possible saltmarsh in the 17th – 18th centuries. This was in turn overlain by redeposited estuarine clays, deposits **102** and **103**, of 0.9 – 1.4m thickness which may represent post-medieval/modern infilling or levelling of the Site. The upper 1.3m of the deposit sequence consisted of demolition rubble, **104**, overlaying the Site and infilling cellar structure **134**.

4.3 Archaeological features and deposits

- 4.3.1 A complex of at least 10 inter-cutting pits (**107, 110 – 112, 119, 122, 124, 126, 128, 130**, see **Figure 1**) were recorded predominantly in the south part of the trench, all cutting deposit **106**, and partially filled with **116** in places, which also filled hollows in the upper interface of deposit **106**. Deposit **116** was a spread which had filled not only hollows in deposit **106** but also the upper parts of archaeological features.
- 4.3.2 It was evident that the similarly-sized pits were all cut from the same stratigraphic and physical location and filled with identical fills, and therefore most likely contemporary. It was therefore agreed with the Curator that sample excavation by hand of this group of features would be sufficient to characterise these features. Four of the pits were hand-excavated (**107, 110 – 112**).
- 4.3.3 The pits were generally shallow (0.2 – 0.45m) sub-circular or sub-oval in plan and generally 0.7 – 1.0m in size though larger pits of 1.2 – 1.4m (**110, 111**) were recorded. The largest being **112**, at 2.6m diameter. All pits had moderate concave sides and shallow concave or flat bases. Primary fills (**108, 113 – 115**) were characterised by a dark grey/black silty clay containing very common finds including pottery, post-medieval ceramic building material (cbm), slate, bone and oyster shell. The upper fills (**109, 116**) were characterised by a dark grey silty clay/clay containing very common finds identical to the lower fills. Because of the small fragmentary size of most of the finds assemblage this deposit had a ‘gritty’ texture, easily discernible as coarser than the primary fills.
- 4.3.4 Both the primary and secondary fills, as well as spread **116**, were interpreted as originally organic-rich domestic waste dumped in pits probably in an area of open ground or backyards of properties fronting Royal Crescent South, Canute Road or Albert Road. The pottery assemblage consisted predominantly of locally made, plain and glazed redwares of 17th - 18th centuries date. Small quantities of 16th – 17th centuries Raeren (German) salt glazed stoneware were recovered as well as a very small quantity of residual 14th – 15th century redware sherds.
- 4.3.5 In the north-east corner of the trench the walls of a rectangular (incomplete) brick-built cellar, **134**, were recorded within a foundation cut, **133**, that truncated all earlier deposits. The cellar was filled and sealed by demolition deposit **103**. The structure was at least 2m deep, 4m(+) long and 3m(+) wide. The cellar walls continued to the north and the east. The structure is thought to represent part of the cellars of the Queen’s Hotel public house that is known to have stood on this part of the Site.

5 DISCUSSION

- 5.1.1 The evaluation predominantly recorded archaeology in the south and the north-east corner of a 120m² evaluation trench located in the western part of the Site. The archaeology comprised a number of inter-cutting and discrete

post-medieval pits of 17th – 18th century date. These cut earlier estuarine clay overlying the natural gravel. These pits contained very common finds of the period, including ceramic building material, oyster shell, pottery, animal bone, slate fragments as well as charcoal. The pits are likely to represent the dumping of domestic waste within an area of open ground or backyards of properties fronting any of the three roads surrounding the Site.

- 5.1.2 In the north-east corner of the trench the remains of a brick-built cellar were recorded which are thought to represent part of the substructure of the Queen's Hotel public house that was in recent times located on this part of the Site.
- 5.1.3 No remains related to the medieval windmill and saw pit suggested by cartographic evidence to have been located in the area of the Site were identified.

6 CONCLUSION

- 6.1.1 On the basis of the results of the evaluation the Curator decided that there would be no requirement for further detailed mitigation in the investigation area, and that the archaeological programme would thus be completed with the watching brief.

7 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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8 APPENDIX 1: TRENCH SUMMARY

All archaeological deposits/features shown in **bold**.

All (+) indicate deposits/features not fully excavated.

Trench	Co-ordinates: (SW) 442767.26 E, 111042.95N (NW) 442761.72E, 111056.00N Ground Level (m AOD): (SW) 2.66; (NW) 1.98	Dimensions: 14.6x8.2m Max.depth: 2.0m
Context	Description	Thickness/Depth (m)
100	Number allocated to unstratified finds.	-
101	Humic layer, above 105 – a dark brown/black silty clay. Very humic, with degraded plant remains visible. Contains pottery. Probable estuarine salt marsh deposit.	0.1
102	Levelling deposit?, below 103, above 101. A mottled bluish-grey gleyed clay with manganese flecking and patches of organic material throughout. Contains occasional cbm frag's. Possibly material brought in to raise ground level during 18 th – 19 th reclamation?	0.4
103	Levelling deposit?, below 104, above 102. A mottled yellowish-grey clay with occasional sandstone(?) frag's and chert gravel. Possibly material brought in to raise ground level during 18 th – 19 th centuries?	0.5 – 1.0
104	Modern demolition, above 103. A mixed gravel and clay deposit containing abundant modern cbm and building waste.	1.3
105	Occupation layer, below 101, above 106. A dark grey/black silty clay. Contains slate frag's, oyster shell, occasional ceramic building material (cbm) and abundant charcoal.	0.02
106	Estuarine clay, below 105, above 117. Cut by pits, 107, 110 – 112 . A bluish-grey gleyed clay with a yellowish tinge in places, sterile, homogenous.	0.62
107	Cut of pit, filled with 108, 109 . Cuts 106. A sub-oval (incomplete) pit with moderate, concave sides and a shallow, concave base. A post-medieval pit of 16 th – 17 th century date filled with domestic waste.	0.22
108	Fill of pit 107 , below 109 . A dark grey/black silty clay with occasional, small chert gravel. Contains pottery, cbm, oyster shell, slag, charcoal and slate frag's.	0.11
109	Fill of pit 107 , below 101. A dark grey silty clay with occasional small charcoal flecks and pottery frag's of 16 th – 17 th century date.	0.11
110	Cut of pit, filled with 113, 116 . Cuts 106. A sub-circular (incomplete) pit with moderate, concave sides and a shallow, concave base. A post-medieval pit of 17 th – 18 th century date filled with domestic waste. Part of a complex of inter-cutting post-medieval pits in the south of the trench.	0.24
111	Cut of pit, filled with 114, 116 . Cuts 106. A sub-circular (incomplete) pit with moderate, concave sides and a flat base. A post-medieval pit of 17 th – 18 th century date, filled with domestic waste. Part of a complex of inter-cutting post-medieval pits in the south of the trench.	0.16
112	Cut of pit, filled with 115, 116 . Cuts 106. A sub-oval (incomplete) pit with moderate, concave sides and a shallow, concave base. A post-medieval pit of 17 th – 18 th century date filled with domestic waste. Part of a complex of inter-cutting post-medieval pits in the south of the trench.	0.45
113	Fill of pit 110 , below 116, above 110 . Uncertain strat. relationships to 114 and 115 . A dark grey silty clay with sparse sub-angular/rounded chert gravel (<20mm) and rare sub-angular flint (<40mm). Contains very common finds including bone, slate, pottery, glass, cbm, oyster shell as well as charcoal flecks and staining. Post-medieval domestic waste.	0.15

Trench (cont...)	Co-ordinates: (SW) 442767.26 E, 111042.95N (NW) 442761.72E, 111056.00N Ground Level (m AOD): (SW) 2.66; (NW) 1.98	Dimensions: 14.6x8.2m Max.depth: 2.0m
Context	Description	Thickness/Depth (m)
114	Fill of pit 111 , below 116, above 111 . Uncertain strat. relationships to 113 and 115 . A dark grey silty clay with sparse sub-angular/rounded chert gravel (<20mm) and rare sub-angular flint (<40mm). Contains very common finds including bone, slate, pottery, glass, cbm, oyster shell as well as charcoal flecks and staining. Post-medieval domestic waste.	0.09
115	Fill of pit 112 , below 116, above 110 . Uncertain strat. relationships to 113 and 114 . A dark grey silty clay with sparse sub-angular/rounded chert gravel (<20mm) and rare sub-angular flint (<40mm). Contains very common finds including bone, slate, residual 14 th – 15 th century as well as 17 th – 18 th century pottery, glass, cbm, oyster shell as well as charcoal flecks and staining. Post-medieval domestic waste.	0.16
116	Spread – below 101, above 113 – 115 . An extensive spread of dark to very dark grey clay with abundant charcoal flecks and staining. Contains 17 th – 18 th century pottery as well as common small frag's (<5mm) of bone, mortar and slate giving 'gritty' texture. Extends beyond cut features into hollows of the upper interface of deposit 106.	0.10(+)
117	Natural clay, below 106, above 118. A Light grey clay with a slight purple tinge with occasional small, chert gravel. A naturally formed layer between natural gravels and estuarine clays.	0.36
118	Natural gravel, below 117. A fine, moderately well-sorted gravel of rounded chert pebbles in a light yellowish-brown silt matrix.	0.1
119	Cut of pit, filled with 120 . Unexcavated. Part of a complex of inter-cutting post-medieval pits in the south of the trench.	-
120	Fill of pit 119 , a dark grey/black silty clay with occasional, small chert gravel.	-
121	Cut of pit, filled with 122 , 123 . Unexcavated. Part of a complex of inter-cutting post-medieval pits in the south of the trench.	-
122	Fill of pit 121 , below 123 . A dark grey/black silty clay with occasional, small chert gravel.	-
123	Fill of pit 121 , below 101. A dark grey silty clay with occasional small charcoal flecks and pottery frag's.	-
124	Cut of pit, filled with 125 . Unexcavated. Part of a complex of inter-cutting post-medieval pits in the south of the trench.	-
125	Fill of pit 124 , below 101. A dark grey/black silty clay with occasional, small chert gravel.	-
126	Cut of pit, filled with 127 . Unexcavated. Part of a complex of inter-cutting post-medieval pits in the south of the trench.	-
127	Fill of pit 126 , below 101. A dark grey silty clay with occasional small charcoal flecks and pottery frag's.	-
128	Cut of pit, filled with 129 . Unexcavated. Part of a complex of inter-cutting post-medieval pits in the south of the trench.	-
129	Fill of pit 128 , below 101. A dark grey silty clay with occasional small charcoal flecks and pottery frag's.	-
130	Cut of pit, filled with 131 , 132 . Unexcavated. Part of a complex of inter-cutting post-medieval pits in the south of the trench.	-
131	Fill of pit 130 , below 132 . A dark grey/black silty clay with occasional, small chert gravel.	-
132	Fill of pit 130 , below 101. A dark grey silty clay with occasional small charcoal flecks and pottery frag's.	-
133	Foundation cut for cellar, cuts 103, filled with 134 . Truncation of levelling deposits for the construction of modern brick built cellar.	2.0
134	Brick cellar, within cut 133 , below 104. A 4m(+) by 3m(+) sub-rectangular structure built into the north part of the trench.	2.0



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Site and trench location

Figure 1



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