Braywick Corner, Ascot Road, Maidenhead, Berkshire

An Archaeological Watching Brief
For Staxlink Limited

by Pamela Jenkins
Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code BAM 05/42

May 2005
Summary

Site name: Braywick Corner, Ascot Road, Maidenhead, Berkshire

Grid reference: SU8956 7906

Site activity: Watching Brief

Date and duration of project: 9th – 13th May 2005

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Andy Taylor and Pamela Jenkins

Site code: BAM 05/42

Area of site: c. 300sq m

Summary of results: No archaeological deposits were observed and no finds recovered.

Monuments identified: None

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

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Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford ✓ 16.05.05
                          Steve Preston ✓ 17.05.05
Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at Braywick Corner, Ascot Road, Maidenhead, Berkshire (SU 8956 7906) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr K.S. Hans of Staxlink Limited, 66 Braywick Road, Maidenhead, Berkshire, SL6 1DE.

Planning application 04/41594 has been approved by the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead to erect a new house and garage on the above site. The consent is subject to a condition relating to archaeology which requires a watching brief to be carried out during groundworks.

This is in accordance with the Department of the Environment’s Planning Policy Guidance, *Archaeology and Planning* (PPG16 1990), and the Royal Borough’s policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Ms Fiona Macdonald, Principal Archaeologist for Berkshire Archaeology, archaeological advisers to the Royal Borough. The fieldwork was undertaken by Andy Taylor and Pamela Jenkins between 9th and 13th May 2005 and the site code is BAM 05/42.

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

Location, topography and geology

The site is located on a small triangular shaped parcel of land at the apex of Windsor Road and Ascot Road in Bray Wick, to the north of Bray and west of the river Thames (Fig. 2). It lies at approximately 25m above Ordnance Datum. The geology is described as Taplow Gravel (BGS 1981). This was observed in the eastern area of the site whereas the western area revealed a very fine dark reddish brown clayey sand.

Archaeological background

The site is located within an area of East Berkshire which is relatively rich in archaeological finds of prehistoric and Roman dates (Ford 1987). A large Mesolithic site probably representing *in-situ* knapping was discovered in 1971 and investigated along the line of the stream close by (SU 892 790) during construction of the M4 spur road to the west (Ames 1993). The medieval settlement of Holyport lies to the south.
Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the watching brief was to excavate and record any archaeological deposits and recover any finds during the new construction work. This was to comprise monitoring of any areas of topsoil stripping, digging of foundation trenches and trenches for services and soakaways. Spoilheaps were to be monitored for finds.

Results (Figs 3 and 4)

The groundworks monitored comprised excavations for the garage and a soakaway, and several service runs. It was not possible to examine the footing trenches for the house itself but the spoil arising from the latter was still on site and was inspected for artefacts but none were recovered.

Garage

The foundation trench for the garage in the south-west corner of the site was 0.70m wide and 1.0m deep. The stratigraphy revealed approximately 0.35m of made ground containing modern brick and tile above a natural dark reddish brown fine sandy clay. Excavation of a short stretch of pipe trench from the south-west corner of the garage to the south-west corner of the site was also monitored. This trench was 0.30m wide and 1.10m deep. All spoil arising from the excavations was monitored for finds but none were recovered. No archaeological deposits were observed.

Soakaway

The soakaway, which was excavated to the east of the new house, was 1.2m x 2.0m and 1.30m deep. The stratigraphy seen was approximately 0.18m of turf and topsoil (50) above 0.17m of yellowish brown clayey sand subsoil (51) containing sub-angular flint gravel. A great deal of root action was also noted. Pipe trenches connecting the conservatory to the soakaway were 0.6m deep and 0.3m wide and revealed the same stratigraphy. No archaeological features or deposits were observed or finds recovered within the areas observed.

Conclusion

Although it was not possible to observe all of the ground disturbing construction work for this project, several trenches were examined at different locations around the site. These observations did not record any deposits or finds of archaeological interest. The spoil arising from the house footings was inspected for finds, and, given that one interest in this location was the proximity of a Mesolithic site identified by a dense concentration of struck flint just to the west, the fact that no such finds were recovered suggests that no significant archaeology was present on the site and indicates the limit of the Mesolithic site in this direction.
References
Ford, S., 1987, East Berkshire Archaeological Survey, Berkshire CC Dept Highways and Planning Occas Pap 1, Reading
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Figure 1. Location of site within Maidenhead and Berkshire.

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Figure 2. Location of site on Ascot Road.

Scale: 1:1250
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Figure 3. Detailed location of watching brief.

Scale: 1:500
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Garage footing trench

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Made ground

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yellow-brown clayey sand with some gravel

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Red brown sandy clay (natural geology)

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Base of trench

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Red brown sandy gravel (natural geology)

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Base of trench

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Figure 4. Representative sections.