New Manege, Chavey Down Farm, Long Hill Road, Ascot, Berkshire

An Archaeological Watching Brief

For Mr M Hammond

by Steve Ford

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code CDF 06/91

November 2006
Summary

**Site name:** New Manege, Chavey Down Farm, Long Hill Road, Ascot, Berkshire

**Grid reference:** SU 8965 7002

**Site activity:** Watching Brief

**Date and duration of project:** 24th July 2006

**Project manager:** Steve Ford

**Site supervisor:** Steve Ford

**Site code:** CDF 06/91

**Summary of results:** Two small areas were stripped of topsoil within the footprint of the new manege. Apart from land drains, no deposits of archaeological interest were observed.

**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 06/91

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at Chavey Down Farm, Long Hill Road, Ascot Berkshire (SU 8965 7002) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Mike Hammond Chavey Down Farm, Long Hill Road, Ascot, SL5 8RD. A planning consent (05/00586/FUL) has been granted by Bracknell Forest Borough Council to construct a new manege. This consent was subject to a condition relating to archaeology which required 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 Borough’s policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr David Thomason, Archaeology Officer with Berkshire Archaeology, advisers to the Borough on matters relating to archaeology. The fieldwork was undertaken by Steve Ford on 24th July 2006 and the site code is CDF 06/91.

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 to the north-east of Bracknell and west of Ascot and lies to the west of Chavey Down Farm itself (Figs 1 and 2). The site where the manege is to be located is a field used as horse pasture within a parkland setting. The ground slopes gently down to the west and lies at a height of c. 78m above Ordnance Datum. The underlying geology comprises Bagshot Beds (BGS 1981).

Archaeological background

The site lies within an area containing a modest number and range of sites and finds listed on the Berkshire Sites and Monuments Record (Ford 1987). To the north-west, Iron Age occupation has been excavated and recorded (Torrance and Durden 2003) and to the east several round barrows are recorded, one of which has been excavated (Bradley and Keith-Lucas 1975). For the more immediate vicinity of the site, an undated but possibly
late medieval earthwork enclosure is present to the west and the site lies within a zone occupied by three post-
medieval parks which may have earlier origins.

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the watching brief was to excavate and record any archaeological deposits affected by the new
construction work. This was to involve examination of all areas of topsoil stripping, landscaping, ground
reduction and the digging of trenches for foundations and services for structures as necessary.

However with the agreement of Mr. David Thomason of Berkshire Archaeology, the fieldwork proposal
was adjusted to require the digging of two trenches 4m x 5m located at either end of the new manege.

Results

The two trenches were dug under archaeological supervision using a small 360° type machine fitted with a
ditching bucket. Their locations are shown on Figure 3.

Trench 1 towards the northern end of the proposed manege was sub-square in plan with maximum
dimensions of 6.0m x 4.9m. The trench was 0.3m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.1m of turf/topsoil
overlying 0.1m of sandy subsoil above what is probably the top of the natural geology. This comprised leached
sand with patches of iron- and manganese-rich mineral soil and rare pebbles and was truncated by 0.1m to
confirm this interpretation. A single clay pipe land drain was the only feature observed.

Trench 2 towards the southern end of the proposed manege was sub-square in plan with maximum
dimensions of 5.3m x 3.7m. The trench was 0.5m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.1m of turf/topsoil
overlying 0.15m of sandy subsoil above what is again probably the top of the natural geology. This comprised
leached sand with patches of iron- and manganese-rich mineral soil and rare pebbles and was truncated by 0.1m
to confirm this interpretation. A single clay pipe land drain was observed along with two clayey patches which
are the remains of tree holes.

Finds

No artefacts of archaeological interest were recovered.
Conclusion

The watching brief carried out during digging of the two trial trenches did not reveal any deposits or artefacts of archaeological interest. It is considered that these trenches are representative of the site as a whole and therefore the development proposal is most unlikely to have any impact on below ground archaeological deposits.

References
Ford, S, 1987, *East Berkshire Archaeological Survey*, Berkshire County Counc Dept Highways and Planning Occas Pap 1, Reading
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Figure 1. Location of site within Ascot and Berkshire.

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Figure 2. Location of site at Chavey Down Farm.

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Figure 3. Detailed location of areas observed

Scale 1:1250