The Coach House, Mill Lane, Cookham, Berkshire

An Archaeological Watching Brief

For Ms Sophia Butler

by Stephen Hammond
Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code CMC 03/104

October 2003
Summary

Site name: The Coach House, Mill Lane, Cookham, Berkshire

Grid reference: SU 9070 8496

Site activity: Watching Brief

Date and duration of project: 20th–22nd October 2003

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Stephen Hammond

Site code: CMC 03/104

Area of site: c. 240 sq m

Summary of results: No archaeological finds or deposits were identified

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✓ 24.10.03
Steve Preston✓ 24.10.03
Introduction
This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at The Coach House, Mill Lane, Cookham (SU 9070 8496) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Ms Sophia Butler, 1&2 Formosa Place, Mill Lane, Cookham, Berkshire, SL6 9QT.

A planning consent (03/40284) has been granted by the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead to demolish existing garages and erect a two-storey extension and detached single garage on the site. As a condition on the granting of planning consent an archaeological watching brief was required to take place during groundworks, in light of the possibility of damage or destruction to archaeological deposits.

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 Mr Kev Beachus, Senior Archaeologist of the Babtie Group, archaeological advisers to the Royal Borough. The fieldwork was undertaken by Stephen Hammond between 20th–22nd October 2003 and the site code is CMC 03/104.

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

**Location, topography and geology**
The site is located on the north side of Mill Lane, east of Cookham and to the south of Lulle Brook at a height of c. 25m above Ordnance datum. The site slopes downwards towards the north and Lulle Brook. The underlying geology according to maps (BGS 1990) is on a boundary between Flood Plain Terrace gravel and alluvium. A sandy gravel was observed during the watching brief.

**Archaeological background**
The site lies close to the Thames which is known to be a favoured location for occupation in prehistoric and later times. Numerous rich sites of many periods within the Thames Valley have been located from the air (Gates 1975). Dredging of the river Thames especially for the Maidenhead section has also produced a large range of
prehistoric and historic tools and weapons of stone, flint, bronze and iron (Ford 1987). The site lies some distance to the east of the historic core of the Saxon and medieval town of Cookham (Astill 1978, fig 10).

**Objectives and methodology**

The purpose of the watching brief was to excavate and record all archaeological deposits affected by the new construction work with particular attention being paid to the possibility of deposits associated with the prehistoric and medieval periods. In order to achieve these aims any ground-intrusive work would need to be inspected. This would include the examination of areas stripped during any ground reduction or landscaping, removal of existing foundations and the digging of trenches for foundations and services of the new extension and garage. Sufficient time would be allowed during the groundworkers’ schedules to be able to meet these aims but without causing undue delay. All available spoilheaps would be monitored for finds.

**Results**

From the watching brief it was possible to inspect all the foundation trenches for the new construction (Fig. 3). The trenches were all 1.10m deep and 0.70m in width. Typically the sections revealed 0.23m of very dark brown/grey loam with frequent sub-angular and occasional brick and tile inclusions covering 0.60m of mid brown/brown silty clay with moderate sub-angular flint and occasional brick and tile inclusions with occasional charcoal flecking. Below this, a mid grey/brown silty clay layer 0.24m thick could be seen with frequent flint gravel inclusions. Natural sandy gravel was observed below this layer at a depth of 1.07m, which continued to the depth of the trench (Fig. 4).

No archaeological finds or features were discovered.

**Finds**

No finds of any archaeological interest were discovered.

**Conclusion**

The archaeological watching brief did not locate any finds or features of archaeological interest. In particular no deposits of prehistoric or medieval date were revealed despite the location of the site near to the River Thames and the proximity of the historic medieval town of Cookham.
References
Astill, G G, 1978, Historic towns in Berkshire; an archaeological appraisal, Berkshire Archaeol Comm Publ 2, Reading
Ford, S, 1987, East Berkshire Archaeological Survey, Berkshire County Coune Dept Highways and Planning Occas Pap 1, Reading
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Figure 1. Location of site in relation to Cookham and Berkshire.

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Figure 2. Location of site in relation to The Coach House and Formosa Place.

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Figure 3. Location of areas observed.
Figure 4. Representative section.