Polkerris, 65 Camp Road, Gerrards Cross, Buckinghamshire

An Archaeological Watching Brief

For Rectory Homes Ltd

by Sian Anthony
Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code CRG 02/89

December 2002
Summary

Site name: Polkerris, 65 Camp Road, Gerrards Cross, Buckinghamshire

Grid reference: SU 9925 8760

Site activity: Watching Brief

Date and duration of project: 4th–5th December 2002

Project manager: Jo Pine

Site supervisor: Andy Taylor

Site code: CRG 02/89

Area of site:

Summary of results: No archaeological deposits were noted

Monuments identified: None

Location and reference of archive: The site archive is presently held by Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd, 47-49 De Beauvoir Road, Reading, Berkshire RG1 5NR and will be deposited with Buckinghamshire Museum Service in due course.

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Jo Pine 06.12.02
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Report 02/89

Introduction
This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at Polkerris, 65 Camp Road, Gerrards Cross, Buckinghamshire (SU 9925 8769) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Nigel Preece, Technical Director, Rectory Homes Ltd, Thame House, Thame Road, Haddenham, Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire, HP17 8DA.

Planning consent has been granted by South Buckinghamshire District Council for the demolition of the existing structure and the construction of two detached houses and garages (02/00360/FUL). The consent is subject to a condition (13) which requires the implementation of a programme of archaeological work during groundworks. This is in accordance with the Department of the Environment’s Planning Policy Guidance, Archaeology and Planning (PPG16 1990), and the District’s policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr David Radford, Buckinghamshire County Archaeological Service. The fieldwork was undertaken by Andy Taylor on the 4th and 5th December 2002 and the site code is CRG 02/89.

Location, topography and geology
The site is located to the south west of Bulstrode Camp, an Iron Age hillfort, on the western side of Gerrards Cross (Fig 1). The site lies at a height of 83.3m above Ordnance Datum and the underlying geology is glacial sand and gravel (BGS1990) which was confirmed in observations on site.

Archaeological background
Bulstrove Camp is a large, multivallate hillfort enclosing an area of c. 1.1ha of the hilltop. This is a Scheduled Ancient Monument (Bucks SAM 11). It is considered to date to the Iron Age although no archaeological investigation has been undertaken to prove this. Similarly the nature of the occupation or other activity within it is unknown. It may have been densely occupied with settlement like Danebury (Cunliffe and Poole 1991) or like Winklebury, have been used primarily as a stock enclosure (Smith 1977). The site lies c. 250m to the south-west of the hillfort.
Polkerris is also the site where a large quantity of Roman pottery was found during construction work in 1951 and thought to represent a kiln site (Rouse 1951, 277) and lies about 50m to the north of the site of a certain Roman kiln (Stainton and Stanley 1987, 160).

**Objectives and methodology**

The purpose of the watching brief was to excavate and record any archaeological deposits which would be damaged or destroyed during groundworks for the new structures. Areas stripped of topsoil and overburden were to be examined and foundation and drain trenches would be observed. Where possible spoilheaps were to be monitored and any archaeological features hand-cleaned and excavated.

**Results**

The initial site visit on 4th December observed the stripping of the topsoil across the eastern part of the site to c. 0.2m depth. The western part of the site comprised demolition debris. The stripped surface comprised an orange-brown clayey subsoil with frequent gravel inclusions, 0.25m deep, which lay on gravel. The foundation trenches for Plot 1 were also observed.

The foundation trenches for Plot 2 were observed on 5th December.

The foundation trenches were 1m wide and dug to 0.75m depth. The overall stratigraphy did not change over the site and no archaeological features or finds were observed. In Plot 2, debris associated with the recent demolition was observed filling a natural hollow in the ground surface.

**Finds**

No finds were retrieved from the stripped surface, the foundation trenches, or spoilheaps.

**Conclusion**

The excavation of the foundation trenches for the houses and ancillary structures revealed no archaeological features and no finds were recovered from this site. This was an unexpected observation given the report of the large quantities of pottery recovered during construction of Polkerris in 1951. It can only be assumed that collection of the pottery at that time must have been exceptionally thorough and that the subsequent building works, driveway construction or landscaping truncated any kiln structures that might have been present.
References

Rouse, E C (ed), 1951, ‘Notes’, *Rec Buckinghamshire* 15, 277
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Figure 1. Location of site within Gerrards Cross and Buckinghamshire.

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Polkerris, 65 Camp Road, Gerrards Cross, Buckinghamshire

Figure 2: Location of site

Site

Polkerris (demolished)

Plot 1

Plot 2

Roman kiln site

SU99200

0 200m

Figure 2: Location of site

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Figure 3: Location of foundation trenches and ground works