4 Marlow Road, Maidenhead, Berkshire

An Archaeological Watching Brief

For Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead

by Andrew Mundin

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code MRM 07/06

April 2007
Summary

Site name: 4 Marlow Road, Maidenhead, Berkshire

Grid reference: SU 8852 8138

Site activity: Watching Brief

Date and duration of project: 2nd–4th April 2007

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Steve Hammond

Site code: MRM 07/06

Area of site: c.1700 sq m

Summary of results: No finds or features of archaeological interest were noted during this watching brief.

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 ✓ 20.04.07
                        Steve Preston ✓ 23.04.07
Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at 4 Marlow Road, Maidenhead, Berkshire (SU 8852 8138) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Mike Tatham on behalf of the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Building Services, Town Hall, St Ives Road, Maidenhead, Berkshire, SL6 1RF.

Planning permission (app no 06/01210) has been granted by the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead for the construction of a new large extension to the existing listed building on the site, subject to a condition which required the implementation of a programme of archaeological work, in this case a watching brief during intrusive 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 Mary O’Donoghue of Berkshire Archaeology, archaeological advisers to the Royal Borough. The fieldwork was undertaken by Steve Hammond and Andrew Mundin between the 2nd and 4th April 2007 and the site code is MRM 07/06.

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 in the centre of Maidenhead, just to the north of the town centre, approximately 150m north of the A4. Marlow Road runs along the western boundary of the site and Kidwells Park extends eastwards from the buildings associated with the redevelopment of this park. The listed buildings (Grade II), which house the Commonwealth War Graves Commission for the Royal Borough, are to be extended to fit with the existing features of the building. The site was, most recently, utilized as gardens for the associated building. The underlying geology consists of flood plain terrace river gravels (BGS 1990), which was encountered in all exposed footing bases. The site lies approximately 31m above Ordnance Datum.
Archaeological background

In summary, the archaeological potential for the site is derived from the possible proximity to the course of a Roman road indicated on both the First (1875) and Second Editions (1899) of Ordnance Survey mapping and repeated in a map by Silver drawn in 1907 purporting to represent the town in 1830. The structure shows as a broad linear earthwork in the park aligned roughly north-south. The significance and destination of this road, if it exists, are unclear and it is not documented by Margary (1955; 1973) nor the Viatores (1964), nor is it shown in the *Tabula Imperii Romani* (TIR 1983). The area of the site is shown as arable farmland on Rocque’s map of 1760. None of these omissions are proof that the road does not exist, but they do at least cast doubt on it. Although a geophysical survey carried out in 2005 confirmed the presence of an earthwork, it did not reveal any details about its structure or possible date (MT 2005). An archaeological watching brief carried out during Phase 1 of the refurbishment located a gravel layer corresponding with the earthwork, but failed to confirm that it was a Roman road (Taylor 2005). An additional watching brief in the park failed to reveal any archaeological deposits (Wallis 2006).

In general, Maidenhead lies within an area of East Berkshire which is relatively rich in archaeological finds of prehistoric and Roman date although little is recorded for the locality of the park itself (Ford 1987).

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the watching brief was to excavate and record any archaeological deposits affected by the groundworks. This was to involve examination of all areas of intrusive groundworks, in particular any ground reduction, and the digging of foundation trenches.

Results

Removal of topsoil to a depth of only 0.2m took place on the site prior to the laying of a mat comprising crushed and rolled rubble (hard core). No ground reduction had effectively occurred to establish this mat.

The foundation trenches which were c. 0.6m wide except at the pad locations, were dug though this mat to a depth generally of 0.8–1.1m. Beneath the rubble mat (c. 0.2m), this revealed an orange/brown sandy silt to a depth of c. 0.7m with some gravel (subsoil) above orange brown sandy gravel. No buildings remains or structures were noted over any exposed section. One service cut containing a live gas pipe was noted parallel to the existing listed building at approximately 2.2m from its north-west elevation. No features of archaeological interest were uncovered and no finds were recovered from the footings or the spoil heaps.
Conclusion

No artefacts or deposits of archaeological interest were revealed during this watching brief.

References
MT, 2005, ‘Maidenhead, Kidwells Park, report of ground and resistivity survey over possible Roman road’.
Minas Tirith Ltd (Archaeological Survey), Marlow
Taylor, A, 2005, ‘Kidwells Park, Maidenhead, Berkshire, an archaeological watching brief’, Thames Valley Archaeological Service report 05/13, Reading
Wallis, S, 2006, ‘Kidwells Park, Maidenhead, Berkshire, an archaeological watching brief’, Thames Valley Archaeological Service report 06/10, Reading
4 Marlow Road, Maidenhead, Berkshire, 2007
Archaeological watching brief

Figure 1. Location of site within Maidenhead and Berkshire.

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Archaeological watching brief

Figure 2. Location of site off Marlow Road.

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Figure 3. Location of grounds and areas observed during watching brief.
Figure 4. Representative section

- Topsoil/made ground
- Subsoil (orange-brown sandy silt with some gravel)
- Natural geology (sand and gravel)
- Base of trench

31.2m AOD

4 Marlow Road, Maidenhead, Berkshire, 2007