Cherry Tree Cottage, Milley Road, Waltham St Lawrence, Berkshire

An Archaeological Watching Brief

For Mr Charles Ancliffe

by Sean Wallis
Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code MRW 07/92

August 2007
Summary

Site name: Cherry Tree Cottage, Milley Road, Waltham St Lawrence, Berkshire

Grid reference: SU 8289 7688

Site activity: Watching Brief

Date and duration of project: 31st July 2007

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Sean Wallis

Site code: MRW 07/92

Summary of results: No archaeological finds or features were recorded during the 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 with Reading Museum in due course.

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Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford ✓ 01.08.07
                          Steve Preston ✓ 01.08.07
Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at Cherry Tree Cottage, Milley Road, Waltham St Lawrence, Berkshire (SU 8289 7688) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Charles Ancliffe of Cherry Tree Cottage.

Planning permission (app no 06/02930) has been granted by Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead for the construction of a new rear extension to the building. The consent is subject to a condition relating to archaeology, which requires that the site be investigated 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 Mary O’Donoghue of Berkshire Archaeology, the archaeological advisers to the Royal Borough. The fieldwork was undertaken by Sean Wallis on 31st July 2007, and the site code is MRW 07/92.

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 situated just on the southern edge of the centre of Waltham St Lawrence, on the south side of Milley Road (Fig. 2). The ground is currently occupied by Cherry Tree Cottage, which is general on flat ground. The underlying geology according the British Geological Survey should be Reading Beds (BGS 1981). The base of the foundation trench recorded chalk, so the ridge that had been noted running northwards of the village must extend further south, with the village on the southern edge of the Cretaceous Chalk

Archaeological background

The site lies within the historic (late Saxon/medieval) core of Waltham St. Lawrence with the parish church just to the north. Waltham St. Lawrence (along with White Waltham) is mentioned in late Anglo-Saxon land charters but it is unclear if this relates to Berkshire or Waltham Abbey in Essex (Gelling 1974). In general, the site lies
within the archaeologically rich Thames Valley, with extensive Roman occupation in the area; especially significant are a known temple and settlement to the north-west of the village at Weycock Hill (Ford 1987). A watching brief to the south of the site found no remains of Roman, Saxon or medieval date (Huscroft 1999).

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the watching brief was to record the presence/absence, extent, condition, character and date of any archaeological deposits that may be located within the area of intrusive groundworks. All archaeological features and deposits would be hand cleaned, excavated and fully recorded. All spoilheaps were to be monitored for finds.

Results (Figs. 3 and 4)

The extension was situated on the southern side of Cherry Tree Cottage. The footing dug was between 0.7m and 1.15m deep. Below the garden topsoil which extended to 0.5m, lay a mid orange brown sandy clay subsoil. This subsoil was 0.4m thick and extend to 0.9m below ground level. All layers were seen mostly undisturbed with most of the subsurface disturbance removed in the strip of the interior of the footing from the lean-to which was the previous structure on this part of the site. At a depth of 0.9m extending across the base of the excavation was natural chalk, which was noted to be degraded in places. This chalk contained no intrusive cuts.

A soakaway was also observed, south of the footings. This was 1.2m square and excavated to a depth of 1.3m. This uncovered the same stratigraphy as in the footing, with no sign of intrusive cuts and no finds were recovered.

Conclusion

No archaeological features or deposits were noted in this watching brief and no finds were recovered from the excavation or from the spoilheaps.

References

Ford, S, 1987, East Berkshire Archaeological Survey, Berkshire County Counc Dept Highways & Planning Occas Pap 1, Reading
Huscroft, L, 1999, The Paddocks, The Street, Waltham St. Lawrence, Berkshire; archaeological watching brief, Thames Valley Archaeological Services rep 99/61, Reading
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Figure 1. Location of site within Waltham St. Lawrence and Berkshire.

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Figure 2. Detailed location of site off Milley Road.

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Figure 3. Areas observed during watching brief.
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Figure 4. Representative section.