Land adjacent to Oak Cottage, School Road, Hurst, Wokingham, Berkshire

Archaeological Evaluation

by James McNicoll-Norbury

Site Code: OCH10/45

(SU 7988 7372)
Land adjacent to Oak Cottage, School Road, Hurst, Wokingham, Berkshire

An Archaeological Evaluation

for Mr Ray Smith

by James McNicoll-Norbury
Thames Valley Archaeological Services
Ltd

Site Code OCH 10/45

October 2010
Summary

Site name: Land adjacent to Oak Cottage, School Road, Hurst, Wokingham, Berkshire

Grid reference: SU 7988 7372

Site activity: Evaluation

Date and duration of project: 20th October 2010

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: James McNicoll-Norbury

Site code: OCH 10/45

Area of site: c. 1000 sq m

Summary of results: An undated gully or garden feature was recorded. The site is considered not to have any archaeological potential.

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 26.10.10
Steve Preston 26.10.10
Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out on land adjacent to Oak Cottage, School Road, Hurst (SU7988 7372) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Ray Smith of Oak Cottage, School Road, Hurst, RG10 0DR.

Planning permission has (app. no. F.2009/0323) has been granted by Wokingham Borough Council on appeal (App. X0360/A/09) to construct a new house and garage. The consent is subject to a condition relating to archaeology, which requires the implementation of a programme of archaeological work prior to groundworks commencing.

This is in accordance with the Department for Communities and Local Government’s Planning Policy Statement, Planning for the Historic Environment (PPS5 2010), and the Borough Council’s policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mary O’Donoghue, Archaeological Officer for Berkshire Archaeology on behalf of the Borough. The fieldwork was undertaken by James McNicoll-Norbury and Jackie Pitt on 20th October 2010 and the site code is OCH 10/45. 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 on the south eastern side of School Road in Hurst on a patch of land adjacent to Oak Cottage just south of the A321 between Wokingham and Twyford (Fig. 2). The area of the site is currently in use as a private garden with several trees occupying the flat area, the underlying geology is described as Valley Gravel (BGS 1946) which was observed in the trenches, and the site lies at 38.0m above Ordnance Datum.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site stems from its location within the archaeologically rich Loddon Valley (Ford 1987; 1997). To the north-west, a Mesolithic occupation site and Roman enclosures have been excavated.
in advance of gravel extraction (Harding and Richards 1993; Barnes and Hawkes 1991). To the north at Whistley Green, which is mentioned in the Domesday Book, medieval deposits are suspected from the presence of a medieval pottery scatter (Ford 1987) and it is possible that further medieval occupation may be present on or near the proposal site. Nothing of archaeological interest was revealed in a watching brief on works for a new footpath at Lodge Road, to the west of the site (Ford 2006).

**Objectives and methodology**

The purpose of the evaluation was to determine the presence/absence, extent, condition, character, quality and date of any archaeological deposits within the area of development. Specific research aims of the project were to determine if archaeologically relevant levels have survived on the site and to determine if any archaeological deposits of any period are present, in particular those associated with medieval occupation.

Two trenches were to be dug each 10.0m long and 1.6m wide. These were to be excavated using a JCB-type machine fitted with a toothless ditching bucket and any archaeological deposits were to be excavated by hand.

**Results**

The trenches were dug as intended and were both 10.0m long with depths of 0.45m and 0.48m; the alignment of the trenches had to be altered slightly due to the presence of trees in the proposed locations (Fig. 3).

A complete list of trenches giving lengths, breadths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1. Feature details form Appendix 2.

**Trench 1**

Trench 1 was aligned NW-SE and was 10.0m long and 0.45m deep. The stratigraphy comprised 0.18m topsoil and 0.17m subsoil overlying natural geology consisting of gravel. No archaeological features were identified.

**Trench 2 (Fig. 4; Pls 1 and 2)**

Trench 2 was aligned W-E and was 10.0m long and 0.48m deep. The stratigraphy comprised 0.20m topsoil and 0.14m subsoil overlying natural geology. A broad but shallow linear feature (1) 0.90m wide and 0.10m deep was recorded at the eastern end of the trench which was filled with a light grey sandy silt (52). The gully was fully excavated but no finds were recovered and both its date and function are uncertain. An area of disturbance nearby was also investigated but determined to be that of a former tree root.
Finds

No finds were recovered from the site.

Conclusion

No deposits of certain archaeologically interest were recorded on the site and neither were any archaeological artefacts recovered. A wide, shallow linear feature was located and examined but produced no datable material. It is possibly a farmland or garden feature of no great antiquity. On the basis of these results it is not considered that the site has any archaeological potential.

References

Ford, S, 1987, East Berkshire Archaeological Survey, Berkshire County Counc Dept Highways and Planning Occas Pap 1, Reading
Ford, S, 2006, ‘New footpath, Lodge Road, Hurst, Twyford, Berkshire: an archaeological watching brief’, Thames Valley Archaeological Services rep 06/72, Reading
## APPENDIX 1: Trench details

0m at W or NW end

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trench</th>
<th>Length (m)</th>
<th>Breadth (m)</th>
<th>Depth (m)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>0.45</td>
<td>0-0.18m topsoil, 0.18-0.35m subsoil, 0.35m+ sandy gravels (natural geology). No archaeology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>0.48</td>
<td>0-0.20m topsoil, 0.20-0.34m subsoil, 0.34m+ natural geology. Gully 1 [Pls 1 and 2].</td>
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</table>
**APPENDIX 2: Feature details**

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<tr>
<th>Trench</th>
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<th>Fill(s)</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Dating evidence</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>Gully</td>
<td>Undated</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Land adjacent to Oak Cottage, School Lane, Hurst, Wokingham, Berkshire, 2010
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Figure 1. Location of site within Hurst and Berkshire.

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Figure 2. Detailed location of site off School Lane.

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Figure 3. Location of trenches.

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Figure 3. Location of trenches.
Figure 4. Detail plan and sections of Trench 2.

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Figure 4. Detail plan and sections of Trench 2.
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Plates 1 and 2.
**TIME CHART**

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Era</th>
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<tr>
<td>Victorian</td>
<td>AD 1837</td>
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<tr>
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<td>AD 1500</td>
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<tr>
<td>Saxon</td>
<td>AD 410</td>
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<td>2100 BC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Neolithic: Late</td>
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