Rainbows, Ditton Park Road, Slough, 2001

An Archaeological Watching Brief

for Entec UK

by Erlend Hindmarch

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code RDP 01/76

November 2001
Summary

Site name: Rainbows, Ditton Park Road, Slough

Grid reference: TQ 0032 7790

Site activity: Watching Brief

Date and duration of project: 21st August to 27 September, 2001

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Erlend Hindmarch

Site code: RDP 01/76

Area of site: 0.5ha

Summary of results: No significant archaeological deposits or artefacts were found

Monuments identified: None

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

This report may be copied for bona fide research or planning purposes without the explicit permission of the copyright holder

Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford✓ 30.11.01
Steve Preston✓ 30.11.01
Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at Rainbows, Ditton Park Road Slough (TQ 0032 7790) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Paul Spence on behalf of Entec UK Ltd, Northumbria House, Regent Centre, Gosforth, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE3 3PX.

A planning application (01/80365) has been granted for the removal of contaminated soil, creation of temporary access, storing of soil and the erection of temporary cabins and equipment. A condition has been included for an archaeological watching brief to be carried out during the ground work. This is in accordance with the Department of the Environment’s Planning Policy Guidance, Archaeology and Planning (PPG16 1990), and the Borough policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr Kev Beachus, archaeological officer of Babtie, archaeological advisers to the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead. The fieldwork was undertaken by Sian Anthony, Erlend Hindmarch, Steve Ford and Richard Oram. The site code is RDP 01/76.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located to the rear of ‘Rainbows’ on Ditton Park Road on the south side of Slough. It lies to the east of the moated site within the area of an historic deer park dating from at least 1335. The area is heavily wooded and contains the remains of a post-medieval greenhouse at the northern edge and a fish pond on the eastern side. (Fig 2). The underlying geology is Reading Beds (BGS 1981).

Archaeological background

The site lies within the historic landscape of Ditton Park, which was a medieval deer park, first documented in 1335 (Ford 1987, 105). The park is an English Heritage Registered park or garden (GD 23 12). Within the park were a moated manor, fishponds and a hunting lodge. The width of the moat suggests that it might have been used as a fish pond but this width and the extent of the enclosed area within could also suggest that it was heavily landscaped in the 18th or 19th centuries. A watching brief was carried out in 1999 (Ford 1999) during
decontamination of the moat silts and for various access works but without recording any deposits of archaeological interest.

**Objectives and methodology**

The purpose of the watching brief was to observe and record all archaeological deposits cleared of topsoil/subsoil and to excavate and record any archaeological deposits that would be disturbed or damaged during the groundworks. Where possible, relative and absolute dating and phasing would be produced for any features on the site, and information on the local economy and environment produced if possible. The character of any deposits were to be established, in order to define functional areas of the site such as domestic or industrial, to enable a settlement history of the site to be produced.

Removal of soil was undertaken using a small 360° mini-digger and was monitored by a qualified field archaeologist. The groundworks were to comprise three stages.

i) Removal of soil to for the construction of temporary road access and a contractor’s compound

ii) Removal of highly contaminated soil.

iii) Removal of intermediate contaminated soil.

**Results**

Excavation for construction of the temporary roadway and the contractor’s compound reached a depth of 0.25m (Fig. 2) This meant that only the topsoil and part of the subsoil were disturbed. No archaeological deposits or layers were seen. Modern (19th-century) brick rubble was present in the subsoil.

Removal of highly contaminated material involved the digging of small shallow pits. A number of these were dug, varying in size from 0.75m in diameter to one hole 3m in diameter. The depth of holes was between 0.25m and 0.3m. No archaeological deposits were seen during this part of the watching brief.

The excavation for removal of intermediate contaminated soil involved the removal of larger areas of soil, mostly in the area of the ruined late post-medieval glass house (Fig. 2, ‘Foundations’). Once again soil was removed to a depth of between 0.2 and 0.3m. Natural was only exposed in a few small patches. Modern brick and tile rubble was noticed throughout the top soil and sub-soil but was not retained. This rubble is likely to originate from the ruined, 19th-century glass house. No archaeological deposits were seen.
Finds

No finds other than those of late post-medieval date (not retained) were recovered during the watching brief.

Conclusion

No archaeological deposits were seen nor significant artefacts recovered during the watching brief. This may be due in part to the shallow depth of the groundworks which rarely exposed the underlying natural geology and it may be possible that deeper excavation would reveal significant layers or deposits of archaeology. However, stripping of topsoil for the access road and contractor’s compound, whilst not exposing the archaeologically relevant levels, did enable a relatively large tract of subsoil to be scanned for finds but this was unproductive and may indicate that this area has a low archaeological potential.

References

Rainbows, Ditton Park, Slough, Berkshire, 2001

Figure 1. Location of site within Slough and Berkshire.

Reproduced from Ordnance Survey Pathfinder 1174 TQ07/17 1:25000
Ordnance Survey Licence AL52324A0001
Figure 2. Location of areas of watching brief.