The Ramparts, Tor Lane, St Georges Hill, Weybridge, Surrey

Archaeological Evaluation

by Daniel Bray and Tim Dawson

Site Code: RGH12/24
(TQ 0864 6174)
The Ramparts, Tor Lane, St Georges Hill, Weybridge, Surrey

An Archaeological Evaluation

for Heritage Design & Build (Uk) Ltd

by Daniel Bray and Tim Dawson
Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code RGH 12/24

July 2012
Summary

Site name: The Ramparts, Tor Lane, St Georges Hill, Weybridge, Surrey

Grid reference: TQ 0864 6174

Site Activity: Evaluation

Date and duration of project: 13th July 2012

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Tim Dawson

Site code: RGH 12/24

Summary of results: The only cut features recorded represented modern garden activity. No artefacts or deposits of archaeological interest were revealed. It is considered that the archaeological potential of the site is low.

Location and reference of archive: The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at Elmbridge Museum in due course.

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                                Steve Preston 20.07.12
Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out at The Ramparts, Tor Lane, St George’s Hill, Weybridge, Surrey (TQ 0864 6174) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Tim Whitworth of Heritage Design and Build Ltd, Newton House, 47 Arnison Road, East Molesey, Surrey, KT8 9JR.

Planning permission is to be sought from Elmbridge District Council for the demolition of the existing buildings on the site and construction of a replacement house. The site lies within a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM23001) and Scheduled Monument Consent (S00036936) was granted for the evaluation by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport prior to the evaluation starting.

This is in accordance with the Department for Communities and Local Government’s Planning Policy Statement, Planning for the Historic Environment (PPS5 2010), the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act (1979) and the District Council’s policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Dr Richard Massey, Inspector of Ancient Monuments at English Heritage. The fieldwork was undertaken by Tim Dawson and Jacqueline Pitt on 13th July 2012, and the site code is RGH 12/24. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at Elmbridge Museum in due course.

A desk-based assessment (Dawson 2012) was undertaken and noted that although the proposed development lies within the hillfort on St George’s Hill, which is a Scheduled Monument, other investigations have revealed negative results so the likelihood of encountering archaeology is correspondingly reduced.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located on an irregular parcel of land on St George’s Hill, to the south of the River Thames and the town of Weybridge. The site currently consists of a house, built in 1932, with adjoining garage set in 0.49ha or garden. The gardens, which surround the house on three sides, are bordered to the north and east by the rampart banks of the hillfort. The remainder of the site is flat, although whether this is natural or the result of landscaping is unknown. There is a steep drop below the eastern rampart to the property beneath. The majority of the site is
located on Plateau Gravel with Barton Beds beneath the site’s southeast boundary (BGS 1981). It is at a height of approximately 78m above Ordnance Datum

**Archaeological background**

The archaeological potential of the site stems from its location within the eastern part of the large multivallate hillfort on St George’s Hill. The hillfort encloses c. 5.5ha of the hilltop, with the ramparts following the contours of the hill. The 75m contour ramparts generally consist of an inner bank with an external ditch and an outer, counterscarp bank, although the more accessible area to the west contains three banks and two ditches. An extra D-shaped rampart to the north-east encloses an area where a stream formerly ran, and the proposed development lies within this area. Most of the banks of the hillfort have survived, although many of the ditches are partially or completely infilled.

A desk-based assessment (Dawson 2012) carried out prior to the project summarized the known archaeological resource for the hill. In summary, excavations in the early 20th century (Gardiner 1911) located Iron Age pottery confirming the date of the site, whilst subsequent work also found Early and Late Iron Age pottery and iron slag (information from the Schedule of Monuments). Recent fieldwork has also uncovered the sequence of construction of the ramparts (Poulton and O’Connell 1984), and a shallow linear feature was found immediately to the south-west of the hillfort (Hawkins and Douglas 1999). However several other archaeological observations within the ramparts have failed to record any finds or deposits of archaeological interest (Hayman 1994; Poulton 2001; Anthony 2002; Milbank 2009; Dawson 2011) suggesting that the interior may not have been occupied.

**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 aims of the project were;

To determine if archaeologically relevant levels have survived on the site.

To determine if archaeological deposits of any period are present.

To determine if any deposits associated with the Iron Age hillfort are present

To provide sufficient information to construct an archaeological mitigation strategy
Four trenches were to be dug using a JCB-type machine fitted with a toothless ditching bucket. All trenches were to be dug under constant archaeological supervision and all spoil heaps were monitored for finds. Any possible archaeological features were to be cleaned and excavated or sampled with appropriate hand tools.

Results

The four trenches were dug as intended and measured between 5.20m and 11.80m in length and between 0.42m and 0.60m deep. A complete list of trenches giving lengths, breadths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1.

Trench 1 (Fig. 4, Pls 1 and 2)
Trench 1 was aligned SW–NE and was 10.2m long and 0.42m deep. The stratigraphy at the SW end of the trench consisted of 0.42m of topsoil directly overlying the natural geology of light brownish grey coarse gravelly sand with bright and dark yellow patches. The NE end of the trench consisted of 0.21m of topsoil and 0.20m of subsoil overlying the natural geology. A linear feature (2) which terminated in the trench (3) was aligned SW - NE along the line of the trench. It was 0.30–0.38m wide and 0.11–0.15m deep and filled with a mix of topsoil and light grey-brown sandy gravel. No artefacts were recovered but given the nature of the fill it is considered that this is a modern garden feature, such as a bedding trench relating to use of the current house. No archaeological deposits were recorded.

Trench 2
Trench 2 was aligned SW–NE and was 11.0m long and 0.56m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.21m of topsoil and 0.27m of subsoil overlying the natural gravel geology. One possible posthole was examined but was found to be a burrow or root hole and not of archaeological interest.

Trench 3 (Pl. 3)
Trench 3 was aligned ESE – WNW and was 11.8m long and 0.60m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.20m of topsoil and 0.33m subsoil overlying the natural gravel geology. No archaeological deposits were found in this trench although garden features containing modern brick and metal were noted cut into the top of the subsoil. These finds were retained on site.
Trench 4 (Fig. 4, Pl. 4)
Trench 4 was aligned ESE – WNW and was 5.2m long and 0.54m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.28m of
topsoil and 0.24 of subsoil overlying the natural gravel deposit. A shallow gully (1) aligned NE – SW was
evacuated and recorded. It measured 0.61m wide and 0.39m deep and produced only modern metalwork
(retained on site). It was aligned similarly to the garden feature in Trench 1 and the two are probably related.

Conclusion

All four trenches were excavated in areas to be disturbed by the construction of the proposed house, garage and
driveway. Several features were recorded that cut into natural geology and superficially resembled deposits of
archaeological interest. However, on examination all were found to be of modern date, or a product of animal or
plant activity. No deposits nor artefacts of archaeological interest were observed. This paucity of definitive
archaeological features demonstrates that the area of the site which is to be developed has low archaeological
potential.

References

Anthony, S, 2002, ‘Brindle Crest, Camp End Road, St George’s Hill, Weybridge, Surrey: An archaeological
evaluation’, Thames Valley Archaeological Services report 02/01, Reading
Dawson, T, 2011, ‘Caesar’s Cottage, Camp End Road, St George’s Hill, Weybridge, Surrey: An archaeological
watching brief’, Thames Valley Archaeological Services report 09/51b, Reading
Dawson, T, 2012, ‘The Ramparts, Tor Lane, St Georges Hill, Weybridge, an archaeological desk-based
Hawkins, D and Douglas, A, 1999, ‘Archaeological investigations of land at Ravenscroft Road, St George’s Hill,
Weybridge’, Surrey Archaeol Collect 86, 210–14
Milbank, D, 2009, ‘Caesar’s Cottage, Camp End Road, St George’s Hill, Weybridge, Surrey: An archaeological
evaluation’, Thames Valley Archaeological Services report 09/51, Reading
**APPENDIX 1: Trench details**

0m at SW or E end

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trench</th>
<th>Length (m)</th>
<th>Breadth (m)</th>
<th>Depth (m)</th>
<th>Comment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>10.20</td>
<td>1.60</td>
<td>0.42</td>
<td>0-0.42m topsoil; no subsoil at SW end; at SE end 0-0.21m topsoil; 0.20m subsoil; 0.42m+ natural gravel geology. Linear feature (3 and 2). [Pls 1 and 2]</td>
</tr>
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<td>2</td>
<td>11.00</td>
<td>1.60</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>0-0.21m topsoil; 0.21-0.48m subsoil; 0.48m+ natural gravel and sand geology.</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>11.80</td>
<td>1.60</td>
<td>0.60</td>
<td>0-0.20m topsoil; 0.20-0.53m subsoil; 0.53m+ natural gravel and sand geology. [Pl 3]</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>5.20</td>
<td>1.60</td>
<td>0.54</td>
<td>0-0.28m topsoil; 0.28-0.52m subsoil; 0.52+ natural gravel geology. Linear feature (1). [Pl 4]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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Figure 1. Location of site within St George's Hill and Surrey.

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Figure 2. Detailed location of site off Tor Lane.

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Figure 3. Location of trenches.

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Figure 3. Location of trenches.
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Figure 4. Trench plans showing modern features.
Plate 1. Trench 1, looking northeast, Scales: 2m and 1m.

Plate 2. Modern garden feature, slot 2 with 3 in the background, looking southwest, Scales: 0.5m and 0.1m.

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Plates 1 and 2.
Plate 3. Trench 3, looking west, Scales: 2m and 1m.

Plate 4. Trench 4, looking west, Scales: 2m and 1m.

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Plates 3 and 4.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time Period</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Modern</td>
<td>AD 1901</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victorian</td>
<td>AD 1837</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post Medieval</td>
<td>AD 1500</td>
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<tr>
<td>Medieval</td>
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<td>Saxon</td>
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<tr>
<td>Roman</td>
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<tr>
<td>Iron Age</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1300 BC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bronze Age: Middle</td>
<td>1700 BC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bronze Age: Early</td>
<td>2100 BC</td>
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<tr>
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