12 Sunning Avenue, Sunningdale, Berkshire

An Archaeological Evaluation
for Rectory Homes Ltd

by Simon Cass
Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

February 2007
Summary

Site name: 12 Sunning Avenue, Sunningdale, Berkshire

Grid reference: SU 9431 6669

Site activity: Evaluation

Date and duration of project: 19th-20th February 2007

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Simon Cass

Site code: SAS 07/22

Area of site: c. 0.5ha

Summary of results: No finds or deposits of archaeological relevance were noted.

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 02.03.07
                                           Steve Preston 02.03.07
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Report 07/22

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out at 12 Sunning Avenue, Sunningdale, Berkshire (SU 9431 6669)(Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Jake Collinge of Rectory Homes Ltd, Thame House, Thame Road, Haddenham, Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire, HP17 8DA.

Planning permission (06/01874) was granted by Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead for the demolition of an existing house and replacement by a single larger dwelling. This consent is subject to a condition relating to archaeology requiring the implementation of a programme of archaeological investigation. This was to take the form, initially of field evaluation by trial trenching, whose results would be used to draw up a scheme for mitigation if appropriate. An area of the plot was reserved for potential future development subject to a further application, yet to be sought, but the opportunity was also taken to evaluate this area during the current stage of fieldwork.

This is in accordance with the Department of the Environment’s Planning Policy Guidance, *Archaeology and Planning* (PPG16 1990), and the Borough Council’s policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Ms Mary O’Donoghue, Archaeological Officer with Berkshire Archaeology, advisers to the Borough on matters relating to archaeology. The fieldwork was undertaken by Simon Cass, Jennifer Lowe and Natasha Bennett on the 19th and 20th of February 2007 and the site code is SAS 07/22. 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 a residential area in the south west of the parish of Sunningdale. It occupies a strip of land between Sunning Avenue to the south and Charters School to the north (Fig. 2). The site is generally flat, though a steep slope exists in the northern part of the site, sloping down to the north and the possible route of a Roman road. (Fig. 1). The underlying geology is noted as Plateau Gravel (BGS 1981) and this was observed in the trenches. The site is at a level of about 63m AOD.
Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site stems largely from its position immediately south of the inferred position of the Devils Highway Roman road, the main road between London and Silchester (Margary’s route 4a; Margary 1955; 78). An antiquarian account exists noting the presence of a tessellated surface, believed to be near the intersection of the railway cutting and the Roman road (Hughes 1890). This mosaic floor along with other finds of Roman tile and brick suggests that there may have been a villa or roadside settlement in the vicinity. Roman occupation sites are known along the route of this roman road, such as that at Wickham Bushes (Corney and Gaffney 1983, Roberts and Leese 1933, Ford 1987)) However, numerous recent archaeological investigations in the area have found little or no trace of archaeological deposits (Cass and Wallis, 2006, Coles and Ford 2004, Oram 2005, Wallis 2004, Taylor, 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. A specific research aims for the evaluation was to determine if any deposits relating to Roman occupation or burial were present, possibly indicative of roadside settlement.

Six trenches were excavated, sited to investigate the areas of major disturbance associated with the construction of the new dwelling and any further development of the site. The trenches were excavated with a JCB-type machine, under constant archaeological supervision and measured between 21.5-24.0m long and were all 1.6m wide (Figs. 3 and 4). Some repositioning of trenches was necessary from the planned locations due to obstacles on site (mature trees and garden features) but this did not affect the ability to investigate the foundations of the new building and was agreed to by the monitor.

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

Results

Trench 1 (Plate 1)
This trench was orientated approximately east-west and was 22.4m long and 1.15m deep at its deepest point. The stratigraphy encountered was 0.4m of topsoil above 0.65m of subsoil/disturbed natural (mottled greyish brown/
white/pale yellow sand) again with extensive root disturbance. Natural geology was encountered at a depth of 1.05m, a yellow/white sand with gravel patches.

**Trench 2**
This trench was orientated approximately east-west and was 22.5m long and 0.95m deep at its deepest point. The stratigraphy encountered was 0.3m of topsoil above 0.2m of pale greyish brown silty sand with moderate root action. This overlay 0.25m of dark greyish brown silty sand again with occasional root disturbance. Below this was 0.2m of mottled yellow/dark brownish grey silty sand with moderate pea gravel. Natural geology was encountered at 0.95m, consisting of pale yellow/ greyish green sand with gravel patches (Fig. 4).

**Trench 3**
This trench was orientated approximately north east-south west and was 24.0m long and 0.65m deep at its deepest point. The stratigraphy encountered was 0.3m of topsoil above 0.25m of pale greyish silty sand. This overlay 0.1m of mottled yellow/dark brownish grey silty sand with moderate pea gravel. The natural geology was encountered at a depth of 0.65m, as in trench 1.

**Trench 4**
This trench was orientated approximately east-west and was 19.2m long and 0.85m deep at its deepest point. The stratigraphy encountered was 0.3m of topsoil above 0.2m of pale greyish silty sand with moderate root disturbance. This overlay 0.3m of mottled yellow/dark brownish grey silty sand with moderate gravel inclusions. Natural geology was encountered at 0.8m, consisting of orange/green mottled sand with gravel patches (Fig. 4).

**Trench 5 (Plate 2)**
This trench was orientated approximately east-west and was 23.8m long and 0.65m deep at its deepest point. The stratigraphy encountered was 0.25m of topsoil above 0.2m of pale greyish silty sand with moderate root disturbance and medium to large gravel inclusions. This overlay 0.1m of mottled yellow/dark brownish grey silty sand with moderate gravel inclusions. In this trench, natural geology was encountered at a depth of 0.55m, consisting of orange/green mottled sand with gravel patches.
This trench was orientated approximately east-west and was 21.5m long and 0.8m deep at its deepest point. The stratigraphy encountered was 0.4m of topsoil above 0.26m of pale greyish silty sand with occasional root disturbance. This overlay the natural geology, an orange/green mottled sand with gravel patches (Fig. 4).

**Finds**

No archaeologically relevant finds were encountered during the course of this evaluation.

**Conclusion**

Based on the results of this trenching exercise, the site appears to have little or no archaeological potential. It remains possible that the Roman road exists at the extreme northern limit of the site, at the base of the slope there but that area will be unaffected by this development.

**References**

Cass, S and Wallis, S, 2006, ‘Charters, Charters Road, Sunningdale, Berkshire (Phase 2), An Archaeological Watching Brief’, Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading
Hughes, G M, 1890, *History of Windsor Forest and Sunninghill and the Great Park*
Oram, R, 2005, ‘Charters, Charters Road, Sunningdale, Berkshire, An Archaeological Evaluation’, Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading
Roberts, K A B and Leese, L, 1933, ‘Wickham Bushes, a Roman settlement’, *Berkshire, Buckinghamshire Oxfordshire Archaeol J*, 37, 150–5
Wallis, S, 2004, ‘Summerwood House, Charters Road, Sunningdale An Archaeological Evaluation’, Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading
## APPENDIX 1: Trench details

0m at south west or west end

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trench</th>
<th>Length (m)</th>
<th>Breadth (m)</th>
<th>Depth (m)</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 22.4</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>1.15</td>
<td></td>
<td>0-0.4m topsoil; 0.4-1.05m subsoil/disturbed natural grey-brown/yellow-white sands; 1.05m+ natural geology yellow/white sand and gravels [Plate 1]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 22.5</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>0.95</td>
<td></td>
<td>0-0.3m topsoil; 0.3-0.5m pale grey sands; 0.5-0.75m brown/grey silty sand; 0.75-0.95m yellow/dark brown silty sand; 0.95+ Natural geology yellow/grey–green sand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 24.0</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>0.65</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.03m topsoil; 0.3-0.55m pale white/grey sand; 0.55-0.65m yellow/dark brown-grey silty sand; 0.65m+ natural yellow/white sand and gravel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 19.2</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td></td>
<td>0-0.3m topsoil; 0.3-0.5m pale grey/white sand; 0.5-0.8m yellow/dark brown-grey silty sand; 0.8m+ natural geology orange/green sand with gravel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 23.8</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>0.65</td>
<td></td>
<td>0-0.25m topsoil; 0.25-0.45m white/grey sand; 0.45-0.55m dark brown/grey silty sand; 0.55m+ natural geology orange/green sand with gravel [Plate 2]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 21.5</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td></td>
<td>0-0.4m topsoil; 0.4-0.66m pale grey/white sand; 0.66m+ natural geology orange/green sand with gravel</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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Figure 1. Location of site within Sunningdale and Berkshire.

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Figure 2. Detailed location of site off Sunning Avenue.

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Figure 3. Plan of trenches.
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Figure 4. Representative sections

Trench 2
WSW  ENE  63.39m AOD
Topsoil
Brown/yellow rooty silty sand
Brown/grey silty sand with sub-rounded gravel
Yellow/brown moderate sub-rounded gravel patches (natural geology)
Light yellow/grey/green sand (natural geology)

Trench 4
WSW  ENE  63.59m
Topsoil
White/grey rooty sand
Brown/grey silty sand with sub-rounded gravel
Orang/green sand (natural geology)

Trench 6
WSW  ENE  63.46m
Topsoil
White/grey rooty sand
Orange/green sand with gravel (natural geology)
Plate 1. Trench 1 looking north east, Scales 1m and 2m.

Plate 2. Trench 5, looking west, Scales 1m and 2m.