Former Cart Shed, Stroud Farm, Holyport, Maidenhead, Berkshire

An Archaeological Watching Brief

For Mr Simon Rinder

by Stephen Hammond and Jennifer Lowe
Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code SFH 06/145

July 2007
Summary

Site name: Former Cart Shed, Stroud Farm, Holyport, Maidenhead, Berkshire

Grid reference: SU 9015 7765

Site activity: Watching Brief

Date and duration of project: 30th November - 11th December 2006

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Stephen Hammond and Jennifer Lowe

Site code: SFH 06/145

Area of site: c. 185m sq

Summary of results: A single gully, probably a drain was exposed within the barn and probably represents an earlier phase of use of the structure. Apart from a fragment of brick/tile from this gully, the only dating evidence recovered was a sherd of later post-medieval pottery from the overlying subsoil layer.

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 ✓ 20.07.07
                           Steve Preston ✓ 24.07.07
Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at Stroud Farm, Holyport, Maidenhead (SU 9015 7765) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Simon Rinder of Stroud Farm, Holyport, Maidenhead, SL6 2LJ.

Planning permission (app no 06/00406) has been granted by the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead for the conversion of the former cart shed to a house. In light of the possibility that archaeological deposits might be damaged or destroyed during the construction, the consent is subject to a condition relating to archaeology which requires the site to 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, Archaeology Officer for Berkshire Archaeology, advisers to the Royal Borough on matters relating to archaeology. The fieldwork was undertaken by Stephen Hammond and Jennifer Lowe between the 30th November and 11th December 2006 and the site code is SFH 06/145.

The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, but will be deposited with Reading Museum in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site comprises a former cart shed located within the grounds of Stroud Farm, Holyport, Maidenhead (Figs 1 and 2) and consists of a rectangular plot of land. The underlying geology according to the British Geological Survey is close to a boundary between London Clay and Taplow Gravel (BGS 1981). An orange clay (London Clay) was observed during the groundworks. The site lies at an height of approximately 25m above Ordnance Datum.
Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site derives from the fact the site is a post-medieval structure which might have earlier (medieval) origins. In general terms, the site lies on the margins of the archaeologically rich Thames Valley (Ford 1987) with much archaeology recorded during gravel extraction to the north (Barnes et al. 1995) and with a rare, rich Mesolithic site to the north west (Ames 1993).

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the watching brief was to excavate and record all archaeological deposits affected by the groundworks. This would involve the examination of all areas of intrusive groundworks, in particular ground reduction to reduce the current floor level, and the digging of foundation trenches for the house, service runs and septic tank. Sufficient time would be allowed to carry this out within the groundworkers schedules.

Results

The floor level was reduced by approximately 0.30-0.35m, at the northern end of the barn. A dark grey brown silty clay, 0.08m thick was removed from the barn floor. This was clearly a modern layer and contained modern debris. Below this layer was a lighter brown-grey silty clay (subsoil); a single sherd of post-medieval pottery was recovered from this layer as well as two small fragments of brick/tile. The natural geology, a light yellow clay, was exposed in patches below this deposit.

Two rows of wooden posts, on either side of the barn, supported the roof; the bases of these posts had been replaced with concrete (Fig. 3). Foundation trenches were excavated between each of the pairs of posts, across the barn from east to west. A narrow linear feature was exposed in each foundation trench, running the length of the barn. This gully (1) was 1.15m wide at the top of the cut, where it was shallow v-shaped, with a narrower (0.27m), more u-shaped profile towards the base, and was 0.35m deep (Fig. 4). It is probable that the narrower slot represents the original profile, with the broader top of the feature representing erosion of the edges. The feature was filled with a mid orange brown silty clay (50) and a single fragment of ceramic building material was recovered from its fill. This feature was sealed by the lighter brown-grey silty clay subsoil deposit.
Finds

Pottery by Paul Blinkhorn

A single sherd of pottery weighing 6g was recovered from the subsoil deposit beneath the modern barn floor during stripping at the north end of the barn. It is glazed Red Earthenware, a fine sandy earthenware, usually with a brown or green glaze, occurring in a range of utilitarian forms. Such 'country pottery' was first made in the 16th century, and in some areas continued in use until the 19th century (McCarthy and Brooks 1988).

Conclusion

A single feature was observed during the ground works within the barn at Stroud Farm. The narrow gully, exposed running centrally along the length of the barn is assumed to be for drainage purposes for an earlier phase of use of the barn. The gully provided a single fragment of brick/tile and cannot be closely dated though it was sealed by a layer which contained a single sherd of later post-medieval pottery.

References

Ford, S, 1987, East Berkshire4 Archaeological Survey, Berkshire Counc Dept Highways and Planning Occas Pap I, Reading
McCarthy, MR and Brooks, CM, 1988, Medieval Pottery in Britain AD900-1600 Leicester University Press
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Figure 1. Location of site within Holyport and Berkshire.

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Figure 2. Location of barn within Stroud Farm.

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Figure 3. Location of areas observed during watching brief.

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Stripping extent over footings

lally 1

timber posts for roof
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Figure 4. Section though central gully and floor.