St Mark’s Primary School, Danebury Road, Hatch Warren, Basingstoke, Hampshire

An Archaeological Watching Brief (2)

For Brazier Construction

by Stephen Hammond
Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code SMB 03/69b

November 2003
Summary

Site name: St Mark’s Primary School, Danebury Road, Hatch Warren, Basingstoke, Hampshire

Grid reference: SU 6085 4870

Site activity: Watching Brief

Date and duration of project: 4th-7th November 2003

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Stephen Hammond

Site code: SMB 03/69b

Area of site: -

Summary of results: One previously excavated Iron Age ditch was observed.

Monuments identified: None

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

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Report 03/69b

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at St Mark’s Primary School, Danebury Road, Hatch Warren, Basingstoke, Hampshire (SU 6085 4870) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Mark Presley on behalf of Brazier Construction, Portswood House, Millbrook, Southampton, Hampshire, SO15 0AH.

Planning consent has been granted by Hampshire County Council for the construction of a new classroom block at the school. This consent was subject to a condition requiring an archaeological watching brief being carried out during groundworks. This is in accordance with the Department of the Environment’s Planning Policy Guidance, Archaeology and Planning (PPG16 1990), and the County policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr Ian Wykes, Senior Archaeologist at Hampshire County Council. The fieldwork was undertaken by Stephen Hammond on the 4th-7th November 2003 and the site code is SMB 03/69b. A previous watching brief was also carried out for the enabling works of the same project (Challis 2003).

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

Location, topography and geology

The site is located in the area of Hatch Warren which is a suburb to the south west of Basingstoke, Hampshire (SU 6085 4870). Brighton Hill, an area of high ground, rises just to the north of the site and the M3 motorway passes to the south-east (Fig 1). The underlying geology is Upper Chalk (BGS 1981) and this was observed on site during excavations. The site lies at approximately 130m above Ordnance Datum.

Archaeological background

Prior to the development of Hatch Warren in the 1980s, extensive trial trenching was undertaken to establish the nature of features which could be observed from aerial photographs of the area. Investigations revealed a complex of Iron Age enclosures with associated ditches, pits and postholes (Fasham and Keevil 1995). A
subsequent excavation of this complex revealed further associated features (Howell and Durden forthcoming). Other work undertaken within the area includes investigations along the line of the M3 motorway between Popham and Winchester including several small watching briefs and excavations at sites from the prehistoric to Medieval periods, such as an Anglo-Saxon settlement at Abbots Worthy (Fasham and Whinney 1991). The earlier phase of watching brief on this site directly relating to this phase of construction works examined the creation of a new footpath to the east of the site. This did not reveal any deposits of archaeological interest (Challis 2003).

**Objectives and methodology**

The purpose of the watching brief was to observe, excavate and record any archaeological deposits that might be affected by the construction of the new building and associated landscaping within the area of archaeological constraint. This was likely to comprise areas stripped of topsoil and subsoil for the footprints of the structure and the digging of trenches for foundations and services on the eastern side of the school.

**Results**

Site visits entailed observing the stripping of topsoil and subsoil for the excavation of footing trenches for the new buildings. The area of the watching brief was reduced in level with the stripping being undertaken by a 360° machine fitted with a toothless bucket under archaeological supervision. The stratigraphy comprised 0.19m of grey brown silty clay topsoil overlying 0.22m of light brown grey silty clay subsoil with occasional chalk inclusions. This overlay the chalk natural and was reduced to a maximum depth of 0.48m. A temporary drainage run, within the bounds of the site, was also inspected which consisted of 0.12m of topsoil overlying the natural and in the area of the car park 0.08m of tarmac overlying 0.35m of made ground overlying the natural. The drainage run was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.71m.

A ditch was observed crossing the area stripped of topsoil and subsoil. The size and orientation of this ditch matched that previously recorded and excavated. It comprises the northernmost corner of main enclosure ditch (Ditch 206, Howell and Durden, forthcoming) which was of Late Iron Age/Early Roman date. The previously excavated slots across this ditch were visible. The fill was mid yellow brown in colour and ten sherds of Iron Age pottery were recovered from the ditch surface. No further groundworks were planned for this area and the ditch was not further excavated.
The remaining areas of topsoil and subsoil stripping lay in areas which had been previously been stripped and recorded during the earlier excavations. No new deposits were revealed.

The Finds

Pottery by Steve Ford

Ten sherds of pottery (136g) were recovered from the uppermost levels of the enclosure ditch. All of the sherds are featureless body sherds. Three broad fabric groups are present and can be correlated with the excavation fabric series (Timby in Howell and Durden, forthcoming). All of the sherds are of late Iron Age or Early Roman date.

Five sherds are coloured orange or black, hand made and with a sparse to moderate angular calcined flint temper. These equate to Timby’s fabric F2 (or possibly F1, ‘Silchester ware’). One sherd is of fabric S3 a brown ware of fine micaceous clay with ill-sorted quartz up to 2mm across. Four sherds are brown/black with a grog temper and occasional quartz and iron grains. They probably equate to fabric G4. All of these fabrics were present in the assemblage from excavated Ditch 206.

Conclusion

The watching brief during groundworks at the site observed one archaeological feature that was found to have been examined during the previous investigations on the site. It was noted that the area of the new groundworks were wholly located within the area which had been previously observed and the watching brief did not locate any additional deposits.

References

Challis, C, 2003, New footpath at St Mary’s Primary School, Danebury Road, Hatch Warren, Basingstoke, Hampshire. Thames Valley Archaeological Services report 03/69, Reading
Figure 1. Location of site within Basingstoke and Hampshire.
Figure 2. Detailed Location of site and archaeological features.
Figure 3. Detailed location of Iron Age ditch and areas observed during watching brief.