Warren House, Crookham Common Road,
Brimpton, West Berkshire

An Archaeological Watching Brief

For Mrs Catherine Bamforth

by Jo Pine
Thames Valley Archaeological Services
Ltd

Site Code WHB 06/109

October 2006
Summary

Site name: Warren House, Crookham Common Road, Brimpton, West Berkshire

Grid reference: SU 5577 6482

Site activity: Watching Brief

Date and duration of project: 12th and 13th September 2006

Project manager: Jennifer Lowe

Site supervisor: Jo Pine

Site code: WHB06/109

Area of site: c.1600 sq m

Summary of results: A covered late post-medieval well

Monuments identified: Well

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

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

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at Warren House, Crookham Common Road, Brimpton, West Berkshire (SU 5577 6482) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mrs Catherine Bamforth of Warren House, Brimpton, West Berkshire RG7 4TD.

Planning consent (App no 06/01154/House) has been gained from West Berkshire Council to construction of two new extensions to the existing building. The consent is subject to a condition (4) relating to archaeology which requires a watching brief to be carried out during ground works.

This is in accordance with the Department of the Environment’s Planning Policy Guidance, *Archaeology and Planning* (PPG16 1990), and the Borough’s policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr Duncan Coe, Archaeological Officer of West Berkshire Council. The fieldwork was conducted by Jo Pine on 12th and 13th September 2006. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at West Berkshire Museum in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site of Warren House is at the cross roads of Crookham Common Road, Brimpton Road and Church Lane (Fig. 2) on a level area at a height of c.83m above Ordnance Datum, from which the land drops sharply to the north. The development itself is located on the eastern end of the property. The underlying geology is mapped as London clay (BGS 1946), and an orange silty clay was observed in the trenches.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site stems from its location close to the recorded finding of a Roman hypocaust system (underfloor heating) just to the east, with Roman material incorporated into the parish church (Lobb and Rose 1996). Evaluation to the north of the site at Blandford Hythe, however, failed to reveal any finds or deposits of Roman date (Hindmarch 2002a and b).
Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the watching brief was to excavate and record any archaeological deposits affected by the new construction work. This includes any topsoil removal and ground reduction as well as excavations for foundation trenches and service runs.

Foundation trenches for the new extensions were observed (Fig. 3). These were excavated with a Kubota-type machine, and were 0.60–0.90m wide and between 1.40m and 1.52m deep.

Results

The most northerly foundation trench (A) aligned south east-north west was excavated in an area already disturbed by the present building. It was excavated partially through a patio and a garden and showed disturbed topsoil and made ground 0.40m deep over a buried dark humic soil 0.15m deep. This in turn sealed a light grey brown silty clay 0.25m deep which in turn sealed an orange silty sandy clay which was at least 0.55m deep. This trench (A) contained post-medieval and modern features. An old soakaway was recorded to the east and modern service trenches truncated the deposits. Of slightly more interest in the far north-west of the foundation trench was a cylindrical red brick well shaft with a conical red brick covering (1) in a yellow-orange sandy mortar. It was only partially exposed in the trench (Fig. 4) and will be preserved in situ. Its construction cut was observed to be cut from high in the section but the top of the cut and also the structure had been disturbed by later modern development and in fact it was filled with brick rubble.

Foundation trench B was excavated on the eastern side of the site aligned approximately NNE–SSW and was mostly excavated through topsoil although there was a little disturbance. The typical stratigraphy was topsoil 0.15m deep over light grey brown silty clay 0.60m deep over an orange silty clay.

Trench C was excavated ENE–WSW through demolition rubble and a soil mix 0.20m deep onto a light grey brown silty clay layer over a thin layer of brick rubble, with 19th-century bottle glass. This overlay the clay natural geology.

Finds

The kick base of a 19th century green wine bottle was noted together with red brick fragments, these were not retained.
Conclusion

The watching brief did not uncover archaeological deposits any earlier than the late post-medieval period and no trace of any Roman building, of which the hypocaust would have been part, was observed. However a water bottle/capped well was recorded which was of interest, and a change in design plan means it will be preserved in situ.

References
Hindmarch E, 2002a, ‘Blandford Hythe, Brimpton Road, Brimpton, West Berkshire, geophysical survey’, Thames Valley Archaeological Services report 02/63, Reading
Hindmarch E, 2002b, ‘Blandford Hythe, Brimpton Road, Brimpton, West Berkshire, archaeological evaluation’, Thames Valley Archaeological Services report 02/63b, Reading
Warren House, Brimpton, West Berkshire, 2006
An Archaeological Watching Brief

Figure 1. Location of site within Brimpton and Berkshire.

Reproduced from Ordnance Survey Pathfinder 1187 SU46/56 at 1:12500
Ordnance Survey Licence 100025880
Figure 2. Detailed location of site on Crookham Common Road.

Reproduced from Ordnance Survey digital mapping under licence Scale 1:1250
Figure 3. Foundations observed.
Warren House, Brimpton, West Berkshire 2006

Figure 4. Section of capped well in Trench A

- Made ground
- Construction cut
- Water bottle
- Base of trench
- Orange silty clay
- Grey/brown silty clay
- Construction cut
- Base of trench

[Diagram showing a cross-section of a capped well with labeled layers and sections.]