8 Wychelm Road, Shinfield, Reading, Berkshire

An Archaeological Evaluation

for Mr Neil Stokes

by Andy Taylor
Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code WRS 05/92

September 2005
Summary

Site name: 8 Wychelm Road, Shinfield, Reading, Berkshire

Grid reference: SU 7339 6814

Site activity: Evaluation

Date and duration of project: 7th September 2005

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Andy Taylor

Site code: WRS 05/92

Area of site: 0.11ha

Summary of results: No archaeological deposits or finds were 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 Reading Museum in due course.

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Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford 13.09.05
                        Steve Preston 13.09.05
Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out at 8 Wychelm Road, Shinfield, Reading, Berkshire (SU 7339 6814) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Colin Brench of Architectural Design, 21 Naseby Rise, Newbury, Berkshire, RG14 2SF on behalf of Mr Neil Stokes of Appletree Lane, Spencers Wood, Reading, RG7 1EF.

Planning permission (F/2005/4147) has been granted by Wokingham District Council for the demolition of the existing structure on the site and the construction of two detached houses and associated access, parking and landscaping. The consent is subject to a condition relating to archaeology, which requires the site to be investigated prior to groundworks.

This is in accordance with the Department of the Environment’s Planning Policy Guidance, *Archaeology and Planning* (PPG16 1990), and the District’s policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr David Thomason, Archaeology Officer with Berkshire Archaeology, advisers to the District. The fieldwork was undertaken by Andy Taylor and Simon Cass on the 7th September 2005 and the site code is WRS 05/92. 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 on a rectangular parcel of land on the north side of Wychelm Road, Shinfield (Fig. 2), which is c.8 km south of Reading. It is currently occupied by a house, garage and garden. The underlying geology consists of valley gravel (BGS 1971), which was observed in both trenches and the site lies at a height of c.47m above Ordnance Datum. The site covers 1.1ha.

Archaeological background

The site lies just to the west of an area recently excavated (Taylor forthcoming), which revealed deposits of Iron Age date, including gullies and a cremation burial, and field ditches of Roman date. The site also lies relatively close to the historic core of Shinfield, with the parish church approximately 400m to the west, and this building
is usually the focus of the original medieval, or even Saxon settlement. Fieldwalking close to the site during the Loddon Valley Survey recovered a few sherds of medieval pottery and a small number of prehistoric struck flints (Ford 1997). A probable Roman site c.450m to the west and a dense scatter of Neolithic or Bronze Age flint to the south of the site were identified during the same fieldwalking project. Aerial photography has located cropmarks in the area; these are undated but could represent prehistoric or Roman activity (Gates 1975).

Field evaluations at Oatlands Road to the east of the site uncovered a late Iron Age ditch and an undated gully (Taylor 2001; Saunders 2000) while evaluation some 300m south-east revealed Roman ditches (OA 1999), but recent evaluation at Hollow Lane proved negative (Taylor 2005).

**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 this site.

To determine if archaeological deposits of any period are present.

Two trenches were excavated (Fig. 3) using a JCB-type machine fitted with a toothless ditching bucket. These measured 5.50m and 4.90m in length and were 1.80m wide. They were dug under constant archaeological supervision and all spoilheaps were monitored for finds.

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

**Results** (Figs 3 and 4)

**Trench 1**

This trench consisted of topsoil overlying subsoil overlying a silty sandy gravel overlying gravel natural at the south-western end. The rest of the trench consisted of topsoil overlying a dark grey brown clayey silt containing clinker and modern tile, none of which was retained. This was overlying gravel natural. No finds or deposits of archaeological interest were revealed.

**Trench 2** (Plate 1)

This trench consisted of topsoil overlying a disturbed subsoil containing modern tile fragments overlying a dark grey silty clay overlying natural gravel. No finds or deposits of archaeological interest were revealed.
Finds

No finds of an archaeological nature were recovered.

Conclusion

Despite the site’s proximity to other previously noted archaeological deposits none were located during the evaluation. It is therefore unlikely that the groundworks for the proposed development will disturb any deposits of archaeological interest.

References

Saunders, M J, 2000, ‘84 Oatlands Road, Shinfield, Wokingham, Berkshire; An archaeological evaluation’, Thames Valley Archaeological Services report 00/72, Reading
Taylor, A, 2001, ‘82 Oatlands Road, Shinfield, Wokingham, Berkshire; An archaeological evaluation’, Thames Valley Archaeological Services report 01/23, Reading
Taylor, A, 2005, 9 Hollow Lane, Shinfield, Reading, Berkshire; an archaeological evaluation’, Thames Valley Archaeological Services report 05/52, Reading
Taylor, A, (forthcoming), ‘The excavation of Iron Age and Roman landscape features at Hollow Lane, Shinfield, Berkshire’ in (ed) S Preston, Prehistoric and Roman sites in central Berkshire and north Hampshire, Thames Valley Archaeological Services monograph 9
APPENDIX 1: Trench details
0m at S or W end

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trench No.</th>
<th>Length (m)</th>
<th>Breadth (m)</th>
<th>Depth (m)</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.50</td>
<td>1.80</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td>SW end: 0.00m-0.20m topsoil; 0.20m-0.40m subsoil; 0.40m-0.75m silty sandy gravel; 0.75m-0.80m+ gravel natural. NE end: 0.00m-0.20m topsoil; 0.20m-0.80m dark grey clayey silt containing modern clinker and tile; 0.80m+ gravel natural.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.90</td>
<td>1.80</td>
<td>0.90</td>
<td>0.00m-0.20m topsoil; 0.20m-0.60m disturbed subsoil; 0.60m-0.85m dark grey silty clay; 0.85m-0.90m+ gravel natural [Plate 1]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 2. Detailed location of site within Shinfield, reproduced from Ordnance Survey Digital mapping at 1:1250.
8 Wychelm Road, Shinfield, Reading Berkshire, 2005

Figure 3: Location of trenches within development area.

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Figure 4: Representative section Trench 2
Plate 1. Trench 2, looking south east, Scales: 2m, and 0.5m.