Summary

Site name: Bramley Grange Hotel, Horsham Road, Bramley

Grid reference: TQ 0076 4495

Site activity: Evaluation

Date and duration of project: 5th–6th November 2001

Project manager: Helen Moore

Site supervisor: Helen Moore

Site code: BGH 01/19

Area of site: 4450 sq. m

Summary of results: Two modern pits (19th century) were recorded in one of three trenches. No archaeological remains were identified in the other two trenches.

Monuments identified: None

Location and reference of archive: The archive is presently held by Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd, 47-49 De Beauvoir Road, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 5NR. It is anticipated that the archive will be deposited with Guildford Museum in due course.

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

Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford ✓ 13.11.01
Steve Preston ✓ 14.11.01
Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out at the site of the former Bramley Grange Hotel, Horsham Road, Bramley, Surrey (TQ 0076 4495) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Guy Gusterson of Beechcroft Developments, South Thames Office, Cobham Park, Downside Road, Cobham, Surrey, KT11 3 LX.

A planning application has been submitted to Waverly Borough Council for the redevelopment of the site for residential use. A desktop assessment was carried out (Ford 2001) to provide preliminary information on the archaeological potential of the site. This report concluded that the site lies within an area where there is a strong possibility of significant archaeological deposits, due to its proximity to the historic (medieval) settlement of Bramley. There is also the possibility of prehistoric, specifically Mesolithic activity, as the site lies on a geological outcrop rich in finds of this date, and topographically lies on a river terrace edge, typically favoured for prehistoric occupation. The site had previously been a hotel with basements, and while this would reduce the potential for intact archaeological deposits it did not completely rule it out.

An archaeological evaluation was requested in accordance with the Department of the Environment’s Planning Policy Guidance, Archaeology and Planning (PPG16 1990), and the Borough policies on archaeology. This was to provide more detailed information, so that an appropriate strategy to mitigate the effects of development on any archaeological deposits could be devised. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr Tony Howe, archaeological officer for Surrey County Council. The fieldwork was undertaken by Helen Moore, assisted by Stephen Hammond on the 5th and 6th of November 2001. The site code is BGH01/19. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at Guildford Museum in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located on a corner plot of land on the western side of Horsham Road at its junction with Snowdenham Lane. (Fig. 1). It lies on the north western edge of the village and covers an area of about 4450 square metres. The core of the original hotel which was burnt down, has been demolished and the site at the time
of the evaluation was overgrown and had been used for fly tipping. The area to be evaluated was once the central part of the hotel, and contained basements. The northern wing of the hotel was built in 1979, and the southern wings were constructed at the same time as the original hotel c. 1886. These were still standing. The western part of the site, which would have been the rear of the hotel, is a landscaped and terraced garden. The whole site is built into a slope, and the garden is terraced at a higher level than the area where the hotel once stood. The site lies at 41.86m above Ordnance Datum (AOD), and is approximately 1.5m higher than Horsham Road which lies on the eastern side of the site, although it slopes to the same level to the north and south. This is partly due to made ground and partly due to terracing.

The river Wey flows to the east of the site, and the ground slopes in this direction towards the river. The underlying geology is Hythe Beds, part of the lower greensand formation (BGS, 1976). This is adjacent to the valley gravels from the floor of the Wey valley. The natural subsoil in the evaluation trenches was a yellow-orange sand.

**Archaeological background**

Records for Surrey indicate that for the area surrounding Bramley, the period most represented by archaeological finds is the Mesolithic. The subsistence economy for this period was hunting, gathering and fishing (Rankine 1954; Mellars and Rienhardt 1978), and there are many find spots of flint tools from this period to the west and east of Bramley on the same underlying geology. This geological outcrop may have sustained a diverse range of plant and animal species, which may account for the prevalence of finds in this area (Ford 2001).

For later prehistoric periods, however, finds are more scarce perhaps indicating a less intensive use of this area. There is no obvious reason why this should be, as river valleys in other regions would be a typical area to find prehistoric activity. Finds from the Neolithic period when farming and a more sedentary lifestyle were introduced include a modest spread of axeheads. The later Neolithic and early Bronze Age produced a dense spread of arrowheads to the east and west of Bramley. The middle and later Bronze Age and Iron Age produced relatively few findspots. The same can be said for the Roman period, and this may possibly be due to earlier impoverishment of the sandy soils (Ford 2001) making it an undesirable area to farm.

Our knowledge of the Saxon and Medieval periods for Bramley is poor, gained predominantly from place names and historic sources (Blair 1991) There is little information with which to map the development of the settlement.
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. It was agreed that three trenches would be excavated, each 10m long by 1.6m wide. These were to be located in areas likely to be affected by the development proposals, with one located as close to the Horsham Road frontage as possible in order to determine if any buildings fronting the road were present.

The trenches were to be excavated using a JCB-type machine under constant supervision by an archaeologist. Spoil heaps were to be monitored for finds.

Results

The three trenches were dug in the positions proposed (Fig. 2). However, while machining out Trench 3, a gas pipe was encountered that was still attached to the mains gas supply, so for health and safety reasons this trench could not be dug to its intended length. This was countered by extending Trench 1 for a further 3m.

The Tarmac and brick surfaces were broken out with a toothed bucket, and then made ground was removed using a ditching bucket. The natural subsoil was then examined for archaeological features and finds. Trench 3 was cleaned by hand due to the difficulties in machining through building foundations and the proximity of the live gas pipe.

The natural subsoil was overdug at the requirement of the monitor in two areas of Trench 1 and in one part of Trench 2 to ensure that no Mesolithic finds were missed, but these proved to be barren of finds and only clean natural sands were observed.

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

Trench 1

This was located in the western area of the site just in front of the terraced garden in a patio area of the demolished former hotel. It was 1.6m wide, 13m long and 0.27m deep. A herringbone brick pavement was removed with the ditching bucket, and a layer of concrete approximately 50mm deep was removed below this. Immediately below the concrete was the natural sandy subsoil which consisted of a bright mid yellow sand with occasional staining from the layer of concrete above. No archaeological features or finds were observed cutting into this natural. Three plastic drainage pipes truncated the northern end of the trench. The natural subsoil was
revealed at 41.60m AOD, with the top of the brick pavement at 42.11m AOD. Encountering the natural subsoil at such a shallow depth suggests that it has been truncated by the terracing of the site, possibly quite considerably, as the lawn of the landscaped garden immediately to the west of the trench is at least 1m higher. It is equally possible that this is made up ground. To confirm that the latter possibility did not occur, the natural was overdug in two areas of this trench to a depth of 40.70m AOD.

**Trench 2**

This was located near the boundary wall of the site adjacent to Horsham Road, on the eastern side of the site, aligned approximately NW-SE. It was 10m long, 1.6m wide and 0.36m deep. Tarmac and made ground up to a depth of 0.36m was removed with a ditching bucket, and the natural subsoil was revealed at a depth of 41.35m AOD at the northern end of the trench and 41.81m AOD at the southern end. This trench was very difficult to machine out due to the presence of the foundation walls of the hotel, and a number of ceramic drainage pipes. The natural was severely truncated by the hotel building, and the footings of this building would have truncated any archaeological remains that may have been present where it was constructed as they were cut well into the natural subsoil. The natural was overdug in one area of this trench to check for prehistoric finds, but only clean natural sands were revealed.

**Trench 3 (Plate 1)**

Trench 3 (Fig. 3) was located on the southern side of the site near to Snowdenham Lane, and was aligned east-west. This area of the site contained brick and concrete foundations with rotten floorboards, and made ground 1.18m deep that had to be removed with a toothed bucket. Natural sand was encountered at a depth of 40.75m AOD. Two 19th-century pits were cut into the natural sand, and contained large quantities of brick and stone that had been backfilled into them. These pits probably date from the same period as the construction of the hotel judging by the late date of the pottery from them. They were 0.84m to 0.90m deep, and approximately 2m long. No other archaeological remains were encountered of any earlier date. The presence of the live gas pipe meant that the trench could not be machined to 10m, so it was 4m long at the base by 1.6m wide.

**Finds**

Brick, tile and pottery dating from the 19th century were excavated from the pits in Trench 3, but due to its late date it was not retained.
Conclusion

The only features of possible archaeological interest recorded and observed from the evaluation were two 19th-century pits that were likely to have been dug at a similar time to the original construction of the hotel. No earlier archaeological features were observed and no deposits which would enable palaeoenvironmental reconstruction were observed. No finds other than those of late 19th-century date were observed on the spoilheaps.

The site has been levelled and terraced and it seems that the natural subsoil had been truncated in this process judging from the shallow depth of the natural immediately below the brick pavement in Trench 1. The foundations of the hotel have severely truncated the natural and will have truncated any archaeological remains that were present on the site, particularly in the basement area of the hotel. Digging deeper into the natural sands produced no finds from the prehistoric periods, and clean undisturbed natural was observed.

References

Blair, J, 1991, Early Medieval Surrey, Sutton, Stroud
Ford, S, 2001, ‘Bramley Grange Hotel, an Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment’, Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd report 01/19, Reading
APPENDIX 1: Trench details
0m at W or N 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>13m</td>
<td>1.6m</td>
<td>0.27m</td>
<td>A very shallow trench with a brick pavement and concrete immediately overlying the yellow natural sands. No archaeological features were observed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>10m</td>
<td>1.6m</td>
<td>0.76m max</td>
<td>The natural sands in this trench were severely truncated by the foundation walls of the hotel. Made ground immediately overlay natural sands, and the walls of the hotel were cut straight through the sand. No archaeological features were observed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.95m</td>
<td>1.6m</td>
<td>1.20m</td>
<td>Deep foundations of the hotel building, and made ground meant that natural sand was encountered at 1.18m below the ground level. Two nineteenth century pits were cut into the natural, and were probably contemporary with the construction of the hotel. No other archaeological features were observed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Bramley Grange Hotel, Bramley, near Guildford, Surrey, 2001

Figure 1. Location of site within Bramley and Surrey.
Figure 2. Location of evaluation trenches

KEY
- Site of Bramley Grange Hotel
- Boundary of land ownership

BGH01/19
Figure 3. Plan of trench 3 showing archaeological features.
Bramley Grange Hotel, Bramley, Surrey 2001

Figure 4. Trench Sections
Plate 1. Trench 3 looking east showing 19th century pits. Scale: 2m.