THAMES VALLEY
ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES
72-90 Grazeley Road, Three Mile Cross, Berkshire

An Archaeological Watching Brief

by John Saunders and Steve Hammond

Site Code GR99/74

SU 7112 6752
Grazeley Road (Phase 2),
Three Mile Cross, Berkshire

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for Linden Homes

by M J Saunders and Stephen Hammond
Thames Valley Archaeological Services

Site Code GR99/74

June 2000
Summary

Name of site: Grazeley Road (Phase 2), Three Mile Cross, Shinfield, Reading, Berkshire

Grid reference: SU7112 6752

Site activity: Archaeological watching brief

Date and duration of project: 21 February – 28th June 2000

Site code: GR99/74

Area of site: 1.5 hectares

Summary of results: No archaeological deposits or features were observed during the watching brief.

Monuments identified: None

Location and reference of archive: The archive is currently held by Thames Valley Archaeological Services Limited, 47–49 De Beauvoir Road, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 5NR. It is intended that the archive will be deposited with Reading Museum in due course.
Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at land to the rear of 72–90 Grazeley Road, Three Mile Cross, Shinfield, Berkshire (SU 71126752) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr David Williams of Linden Homes, Linden House, The Village at Caterham Barracks, Coulsdon Road, Caterham-on-the-Hill, Surrey, CR3 5YB.

A planning application (98/68687/F) had been submitted to Wokingham District Council for the construction of 44 dwellings with an access road, garages and ancillary services. Permission has been granted subject to a condition (19), which required the implementation of a programme of archaeological work. This is in accordance with the Department of the Environment’s Policy and Planning Guidance Note, *Archaeology and Planning* (PPG16 1990) and the District policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr R Bourn of Babtie Group, who advise Wokingham District Council on archaeological matters. The fieldwork was undertaken by Graham Hull, Luis Huscroft, Jo Pine, M John Saunders and Stephen Hammond from February through to June 2000. The site code is GR99/74.

Location, Topography and Geology

The site comprises a roughly rectangular plot of land of 1.5 hectares, situated to the rear of nos 72–90 Grazeley Road, Three Mile Cross, Shinfield, Berkshire (Fig. 1). It lies to the south of Grazeley Road and to the east of the A33 by-pass. The site slopes steeply down from south to north towards Grazeley Road and lies at a height of c. 45m above Ordnance Datum. According to geological maps the underlying geology is London Clay (BGS 1971) and this was confirmed during the watching brief.

Archaeological Background

The brief prepared by Babtie Group has highlighted the archaeological potential of the site. It is thought to lie on the possible projected line of the Roman road from Silchester to St Albans and there was the possibility that...
groundworks would encounter the remains of the road and associated roadside settlement. The site also lies close to the gravel expanses of the River Kennet and Foudry Brook, areas which have produced extensive evidence for Prehistoric and Roman settlement (e.g. Moore and Jennings 1992). Some extension of these settlements onto adjacent areas has been documented (Howell and Ford 1994) and this extension of settlement may have occurred in the vicinity of the proposal site. A watching brief to the east, on the Phase 1 development (Taylor 1998), located a pit associated with burnt flint and a sherd of Iron Age pottery.

Objectives and Methodology

The purpose of the watching brief was to observe, excavate and record all archaeological deposits within areas of ground disturbance associated with the construction of the new houses and associated services. This included observation of the grubbing-out of trees and hedges, ground reduction, the excavation of service runs and foundation trenches (Fig. 2).

Results

No archaeological features were observed during the initial phases of site clearance involving the grubbing-out of trees and hedges. The stripping of an access corridor approximately 80m long by 4m wide was also observed, which involved the removal of 0.15–0.20m of topsoil. Again no archaeological deposits were present.

Further monitoring of the topsoil stripping for the access road was carried out as well as sections of service runs for sewers and their associated manholes. The stripping involved the removal of 0.20m of topsoil onto an orange-brown sandy silt subsoil. The sewage runs were also examined and were dug to a depth c. 2.20m. From the section it could be seen that these truncated brown-orange natural clay. No archaeological features were observed. Further to this, the area associated with house plots 62–70, an area sloping from south to north, was stripped to reveal brown-orange natural clay exposing no archaeological finds or deposits. The foundation trenches for each of the house plots were inspected but again no archaeological features or deposits were observed. No artefacts were recovered during the course of the watching brief.

Conclusion

From observations made during the course of the watching brief it would not appear that archaeological deposits have been damaged or destroyed during groundworks for Phase 2 of the new housing development.

References
Howell, I and Ford, S, 1994, Little Lea Farmhouse, Reading, Berkshire, archaeological evaluation, Thames Valley Archaeological Services report 94/42, Reading
Moore, J and Jennings, D, 1992, *Reading Business Park: a Bronze Age Landscape*, Thames Valley Landscapes: the Kennet Valley, 1, Oxford Archaeological Unit, Oxford
Taylor, K, 1998, Grazeley Road, Three Mile Cross, Berkshire, an archaeological watching brief, Thames Valley Archaeological Services report 98/4, Reading
72-90 Grazeley Road, Three Mile Cross, Berkshire, 2000

Figure 1. Location of site within Three Mile Cross and Berkshire.

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Figure 2. Location of site.
Figure 3. Location of areas monitored during watching brief.