48 Braybrooke Road, Wargrave, Berkshire

An Archaeological Watching Brief

for Millgate Homes Ltd

by Steve Ford
Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code BRW01/84

October 2001
Summary

Site name: 48 Braybrooke Road, Wargrave, Berkshire

Grid reference: SU 7865 7830

Site activity: Watching Brief

Date and duration of project: 20th and 27th September 2001

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Erlend Hindmarch

Site code: BRW01/84

Area of site: 2100 sq. m

Summary of results: No archaeological features or finds were present.

Monuments identified: None

Location and reference of archive: The archive is presently at Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd, 47–49 De Beauvoir Road, Reading, RG1 5NR, and will be deposited with Reading Museum in due course.

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Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford 30.10.01
                          Steve Preston 31.10.01
Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at 48 Braybrooke Road, Wargrave, Berkshire (SU 7865 7830) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Greg Meier of Millgate Homes, Millgate Court, Terrace Road North, Binfield, Berkshire, RG42 5HZ. Planning permission has been granted (F/2000/2140) for the demolition of an existing structure and the building of two new houses. Permission was subject to a condition requiring a watching brief to be undertaken during the groundworks.

This is in accordance with the Department of the Environment’s Planning Policy Guidance, *Archaeology and Planning* (PPG16 1990), and the District policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr Kev Beachus of Babtie Group Ltd, archaeological advisers to Wokingham District Council. The fieldwork was undertaken by Erlend Hindmarch and Siân Anthony on 20th and 27th September 2001. The site code is BRW01/84.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located on the southern margins of Wargrave on the north side of Braybrooke Road. It lies on gently sloping land at a height of 45m above Ordnance Datum. The site is on the floor of the Thames Valley, close to the confluence of the Thames with the Loddon. The site is currently occupied by former gardens and the demolished remnants of the former building. According to the British Geological Survey, the geology of the site is Upper Chalk, though river gravel lies nearby to the west (BGS 1946). The foundation trenches did reveal chalk at depth but overlain by sand.

Archaeological background

The site lies on the southern margins of the village and beyond the likely limit of the historic core of the medieval and early post-medieval town (Astill 1978, fig. 27). However, field survey on arable land to the south revealed large numbers of struck flints of Neolithic and Bronze Age date, suggesting the presence of occupation sites of these periods, somewhere in the vicinity (Ford 1994–7). Such sites may be expected to be represented by subsoil deposits (e.g., rubbish pits) and/or structural remains (e.g., postholes). Field evaluation carried out c.
200m to the east of the site revealed a few prehistoric struck flints but nothing else of archaeological interest (Pine and Saunders 1999).

**Objectives and methodology**

The purpose of the watching brief was to monitor the ground works involved in the development, specifically the soil- and overburden stripping and the digging of foundation and service trenches, and to record any archaeological remains encountered. Spoil heaps were to be examined for archaeological material and sections of trenches were to be examined for archaeological features.

**Results**

*Plot A (Fig. 2)*

Topsoil and subsoil were stripped of c. 0.6m of overburden for the footprint of the new structure. The foundation trenches were c. 0.6m wide and were dug down to a depth of c. 3m. The stratigraphy visible in the trenches comprised 0.2m of topsoil overlying 0.4m of subsoil over a light brown sand natural. The subsoil was much thicker towards the western end of the area and comprised brick rubble. Chalk was recorded beneath c. 1m of the natural sand. No archaeological deposits were observed either on the stripped surface or within the trench sections. The spoilheaps were monitored but no finds were recovered.

*Plot B*

The footprint of this structure had been stripped of topsoil and subsoil and clearly exposed the brown sand natural (which contained rare gravel). This surface was carefully inspected but no archaeological features or finds were observed. The spoilheaps deriving from this area were monitored but no finds were recovered.

**Conclusion**

No deposits of archaeological significance were observed on the site, either during examination of areas stripped of overburden, or during inspection of the trenches dug for foundations and services. No finds were recovered from any part of the site.

**References**

Ford, S, 1994–7, ‘Loddon Valley (Berkshire) fieldwalking survey’, *Berkshire Archaeol J* 75, 11–33
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Figure 1. Location of site within Wargrave and Berkshire.

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Figure 2. Site plan showing location of areas monitored during watching brief.