Kendrick School, East Street, Reading, Berkshire

An Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment
for the Trustees of Kendrick School

by Steve Ford
Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code ESR03/52

July 2003
Summary

Site name: Kendrick School, East Street, Reading, Berkshire

Grid reference: SU 7196 7299

Site activity: Desk-based assessment

Date and duration of project: 24th June – 9th July 2003

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Steve Ford

Site code: ESR03/52

Area of site: 2050 sq. m

Summary of results: The site lies on or adjacent to the rear of properties fronting London Street present in late Medieval times and later. The site also lies on East Street which is thought to reflect the approximate location of the civil war defences of the town built in 1642.
Introduction

This desk-based study is an assessment of the archaeological potential of a site at Kendrick Girls School, East Street, Reading located at SU 7196 7299 (Fig. 1). The project was commissioned by Mr John Cornwell of Bell Cornwell Partnership, Oakview House, Station Road, Hook, Hampshire, RG27 9TP on behalf of the Trustees of Kendrick School. It comprises the first stage of a process to determine the presence/absence, extent, character, quality and date of any archaeological remains, which may be affected by redevelopment of the area. The redevelopment proposals comprise demolition of the existing buildings and construction of a sports hall and teaching block.

Site description, location and geology

The site is located to the south of Reading centred on East Street, which lies to the east of London Street. The development area lies on level ground at a height of approximately 37.4m above Ordnance Datum at the southern end and comprises a rectilinear plot of c. 2060 sq m set back from the east side of East Street. It is currently occupied by school buildings with further school facilities further to the east. The site is located on Valley Gravel (BGS 1946).

Planning background and development proposals

An application for planning permission has been made for the redevelopment of the site (02/01269/FUL/SJH). The redevelopment proposals comprise demolition of the existing buildings and construction of a sports hall and teaching block (Fig. 10).

Archaeology and Planning (PPG 16 1990) provides guidance relating to archaeology within the planning process. It points out that where a desk-based assessment has shown that there is a strong possibility of significant archaeological deposits in a development area it is reasonable to provide more detailed information from a field evaluation so that an appropriate strategy to mitigate the effects of development on archaeology can be devised:

Paragraph 21 states:
‘Where early discussions with local planning authorities or the developer’s own research indicate that important archaeological remains may exist, it is reasonable for the planning authority to request the prospective developer to arrange for an archaeological field evaluation to be carried out...’

Should the presence of archaeological deposits be confirmed further guidance is provided. *Archaeology and Planning* stresses preservation *in situ* of archaeological deposits as a first consideration as in paragraphs 8 and 18.

Paragraph 8 states:

‘...Where nationally important archaeological remains, whether scheduled or not, and their settings, are affected by proposed development there should be a presumption in favour of their physical preservation...’

Paragraph 18 states:

‘The desirability of preserving an ancient monument and its setting is a material consideration in determining planning applications whether that monument is scheduled or unscheduled...’

However, for archaeological deposits that are not of such significance it is appropriate for them to be ‘preserved by record’ (i.e., fully excavated and recorded by a competent archaeological contractor) prior to their destruction or damage.

Paragraph 25 states:

‘Where planning authorities decide that the physical preservation *in situ* of archaeological remains is not justified in the circumstances of the development and that development resulting in the destruction of the archaeological remains should proceed, it would be entirely reasonable for the planning authority to satisfy itself ... that the developer has made appropriate and satisfactory provision for the excavation and recording of remains.’

The Berkshire Structure Plan 1991–2006 (BCC 1994) also outlines policy regarding the archaeological potential of development sites.

Policy EN5, para 6.16:

‘Archaeological remains are irreplaceable. They are the evidence, in some cases the only evidence, of the past development of our civilisation. They comprise a varied resource, including buried objects, and standing structures ranging in date from prehistory to the industrial era. Particular care must be taken to ensure that archaeological remains and evidence are not needlessly or thoughtlessly destroyed.’

Policy EN6:

‘Scheduled Ancient Monuments and the most important non-scheduled remains, together with their settings, will be protected and managed to ensure that they are not damaged or destroyed. Where a lack of information precludes the proper assessment of a site or sites with archaeological potential, this information will have to be provided in advance of any decision to affect that site or area. Where preservation is not possible local planning authorities should be satisfied before granting planning permission that appropriate arrangements have been made for excavation and recording to take place prior to development.’

This is reiterated in the Reading Borough Local Plan (RBLP 1995), Policy CUD 12:
‘Appropriate mitigation of a development’s effect on archaeological remains will be secured before any planning permission is granted and where appropriate, before development takes place. Where evidence points to remains being of outstanding importance, planning permission may be refused on archaeological grounds.’

**Methodology**

The assessment of the site was carried out by the examination of pre-existing information from a number of sources recommended by the Institute of Field Archaeologists paper ‘Standards in British Archaeology’ covering desk-based studies. These sources include historic and modern maps, the Reading Sites and Monuments Record, geological maps and any relevant publications or reports. A site visit was conducted on 4th July 2003 in order to determine the current land use, topography and disturbance of the site.

**Archaeological background**

*Reading Sites and Monuments Record*

A search was made of the Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) on 24th June 2003 for a radius of 200m surrounding the site. The results of this search indicate that there are 14 records in close proximity to the site. The locations of these are illustrated in Figure 1 and the entries are summarized in Appendix 1.

**Prehistoric**

No finds or deposits of prehistoric date are recorded within the study area. A number of finds, such as flint tools and unworked wooden stakes are recorded from sites near to the river Kennet (north of the search radius) and elsewhere within the Borough.

**Roman**

Roman evidence is similarly sparse with no occupation sites within the study area though four locations revealed stray or residual finds. Three of these relate to the presence of Roman pottery [Fig. 1: 1, 7, 10]. These stray finds probably derive from the manuring of farmland and indicate the presence of Roman occupation somewhere in the general vicinity of the site. The fourth entry is that for a quernstone [2]. This is an object that would not normally be expected to be discarded any great distance from where it had been used on an occupation site. It is not know how the date of this object was determined: it may have been reused on a medieval site or it may reflect Roman occupation nearby.
Saxon

A single entry within the study area records the finding of a dagger during construction of the dual carriageway (Queens Road) to the north [3]. This dagger is possibly of medieval date. Late Saxon occupation in Reading is thought to be mainly located within the city centre in the St Mary’s Butts area (Astill 1978), though stray finds of early Saxon pottery are recorded from other locations. This dagger is probably a stray find.

Medieval

Finds and sites of this period make up the majority of the SMR records surrounding the site. The site lies just beyond the margins of what is considered to be the extent of the medieval suburban settlement of Reading which lay along London Street (Astill 1987, fig. 2.3). It is possible that East Street, which forms the western boundary of the proposal site, defines the rear boundaries of properties fronting London Street. A survey by Roger Amyce in 1552 documents the occupancy of these properties at this time. This medieval and early post-medieval occupation is partly represented by the results of a small number of evaluations and watching briefs carried out on London Street, with pits, gullies, quarry pits and possibly metalworking having been observed, but lacking structural evidence, probably due to later truncation [7, 11]. The suburban church of St Giles which dates from the late 12th century lies on the fringes of the study area [13].

Stray finds include a coin [5] and a pottery vessel [4].

Post medieval

The watching briefs and evaluations carried out on London Street also recorded both early and later post-medieval activity [7, 11] and also on London Street, an early post-medieval building was recorded prior to demolition [14]. The most significant entry for the proposal site itself relates to this period. The Civil War defences of Reading constructed in 1642 were mapped (Fig. 3) and have recently been located on the ground within the south part of the study area [8, 10]. The line of the earthworks is thought to lie on or close to East Street [9]. The exact location on East Street is not known as following their comprehensive slighting on the King’s orders in 1644 their position was not generally recorded on later maps.

Undated and negative

Two entries refer to archaeological investigations and record the location of a field evaluation which produced negative results [12], and listed building recording of a late post-medieval building [6].
Listed buildings

There are no listed buildings on or within the close vicinity of the site.

Registered Parks and Gardens; Registered Battlefields

The site does not lie within a registered historic park or garden, nor does it lie within a registered battlefield area.

Aerial Photography

The site lies within an area developed before the advent of aerial photography and does not have any potential for site discovery from examination of the various collections.

Cartographic sources

A range of Ordnance Survey and other historical maps of the area were consulted at Berkshire Record Office and Reading Local Studies Library in order to ascertain what activity had been taking place throughout the site’s later history and whether this may have affected any possible archaeological deposits within the proposal area (see Appendix 2).

The earliest ‘map’ available for the area showing the town in detail is Roger Amyce’s survey of 1552 (not illustrated). This shows ownership of properties on the east side of London Street in the vicinity of the site but does not show East Street nor the eastern boundaries of the plots. A more usable map is that of Reading by Speed (1610; Fig. 2). This shows the environs of the site with London Street and London Road shown. To the rear (east) of London Street, whose frontage is fully developed, the line of East Street might be represented by a ditch or other boundary defining the rears of the London Street properties. Otherwise the site is depicted as farmland.

A more important map is that depicting the defences built in 1642 for the Civil War shown in Fig. 3 (from Slade 2001; based on a map in the Bodleian Library). This shows a rampart with bastions fronted by a ditch approximately parallel to, and east of London Street. The location of this earthwork, must lie on or close to the site area. The earthworks, presumably, lie more or less on the margins of the property boundaries shown on the 1610 map.

In marked contrast to the previous map, a large scale plan of the site in 1722 does not make any reference to the presence of the civil war earthwork (Fig. 4). The earthworks were comprehensively slighted in 1644 on the King’s orders (Slade 2001, 33) and presumably both the memory and their physical location was lost to the
subsequent cartographers. East Street is now shown as a fully formed road or track with South Street shown as a smaller track to the north. The east of East Street in the vicinity of the site is occupied by structures. The western side of East Street is occupied are gardens belonging to London Street properties. London Road to the south is labelled as Ort Lane (wrongly?). East Street does not continue in its northerly direction beyond South Street but a track turns north-east to flank the edge of a quarry. It is possible that this bend reflects the line of the civil war earthwork as both features change direction in a similar fashion.

Rocque’s map of 1761 (Fig. 5) shows Reading in moderate detail. East Street can be identified and structures occupy the site east side of East Street (presumably those depicted on the 1722 map).

Coates’ (Fig. 6) map of 1802, shows the environs of the site in detail. Again a number of detached properties are shown on the east side of East Street with farmland/gardens to the east.

By 1834 (not illustrated) Dormer’s map of Reading is similar to the previous plan but at a smaller scale. and Simmons’ map of 1861 is drawn schematically (not illustrated).

The First Edition Ordnance Survey of 1879 (Fig. 7) shows much more development of this area of the town, in detail. The site is now occupied by several terraced houses and possibly one larger property. The main school building (The Cedars) is presumably a private house at this time as are its gardens. This pattern is the same on the 1900 and 1912 Ordnance Survey maps (not illustrated) but by 1931, the larger property on East Street has been demolished to make an entrance for the school (Fig. 8). By the late 1950s most of the terraced properties have gone and more are removed as shown on the maps of the 1960s and 1980s (Fig. 9).

**Documentary Sources**

Whilst there is evidence of prehistoric and Roman occupation of the Reading area particularly to the east at Thames Valley Park (Barnes et al. 1997) and to the south at Green Park (Moore and Jennings 1992), the main evidence for the establishment of a settlement begins with the Saxons, the place-name deriving from ‘followers of Reada’. It is documented as Readingum from c. AD900 and by the time of Domesday Book (AD1086) as Reddingses (Mills 1998). Reading is first mentioned in AD871 when a Danish army set up a winter camp here, the exact location is unknown but is assumed to lie in the vicinity of the site (Astill 1978). In 1006, a Danish army is again noted to have been in the area, with documentary evidence that they burnt the town. The centre of the town had probably been established in the vicinity of St Mary’s Butts, at the junction of the roads from Oxford to Winchester and London to Bath, well to the north-west of the proposal site.
The status of the town during Anglo-Saxon times is indicated by the establishment of a mint (albeit a minor one; Freeman 1985) and market, and it was near the end of the Saxon period that Reading became a borough (VCH 1972). Domesday Book notes that the manor was formerly held by King Edward. It was already quite a prosperous manor, valued at £48 and listed with four mills and three fisheries and housing 55 villagers and 30 small-holders (Morgan 1979, 1: 41–2); further property in Reading, belonging to the Abbot of Battle, had a further 2 mills and 2 fisheries and 17 more taxpayers (Morgan 1979, 15:1).

During the Medieval period an abbey was established in the town (in 1121). A wharf was soon constructed on the Kennet in close proximity to the Abbey site. With the establishment of the Abbey and the wharf, trade to the area increased and the town grew. During this time, the Abbott was the ultimate seat of power in the town; however, there was almost continual conflict between the interest of the Abbey and of the merchant’s guilds. In 1253, an agreement between the two was reached, which lasted until the dissolution of the Abbey in 1539. During this period, Reading was the wealthiest town in Berkshire, partly due to the expanding town market, particularly in the wool trade.

In 1642 part of the town and abbey was encircled by defences (Fig. 3) for the first time, consisting of bastions linked by earth banks. The town was first under Royalist control, and attacked in April 1643 by the Parliamentarians first on the south and west of the town and then by Lord Grey from the north-east, possibly involving the redoubts on or near the site. The siege lasted 10 days with the Parliamentarians successful although they withdrew from the town only five months later. Royalist defences were re-fortified but abandoned soon after and ordered to be slighted in May 1644 with £200 allotted to do this (Cram 1988).

By the end of the 17th century the town was no longer reliant on wool trade, with the expansion of other industries such as pin making and sailcloth manufacture. The economy of Reading prospered, resulting in a population increase and marked rebuilding, continuing into the 18th and 19th centuries (VCH 1972).

Discussion

In considering the archaeological potential of the study area, various factors must be taken into account, including previously recorded archaeological sites, previous land-use and disturbance and future land-use including the proposed development.

A review of cartographic and documentary evidence suggests the possibility of significant archaeological evidence, principally in the form of Civil War defence features. The Civil War defences were open for only two years before being slighted, however the large bank and ditches with associated structures could potentially be
present on the site. There is a lack of information regarding defensive systems of the Civil War as many were
destroyed quickly after the war with little recording. There is a lesser possibility that there may be some
Medieval activity relating to the properties fronting London Street if the suggestion that East Street demarks the
rear of these properties is false.

The survival of any possible archaeological deposits will be conditional on the extent of later truncations,
as the site has been developed during the 18th and 19th centuries. However the extent of any truncation cannot
be easily assessed without archaeological field observation.

Following the above review, it will be necessary to provide further information about the potential of the
site from field observations in order to draw up a scheme to mitigate the impact of development on any below
ground archaeological deposits if necessary. A scheme for this evaluation will need to be drawn up and approved
by the archaeological advisers to the Borough and implemented by a competent archaeological contractor. The
information provided by the fieldwork can be used to draw up a mitigation strategy to minimize the effects of
development on any archaeological deposits present. Such a field evaluation, and any subsequent mitigation
fieldwork could be secured using a suitably worded condition appended to any consent gained.

References
Cram, L, 1988 *Reading Abbey*, Reading Museum and Art Gallery
Freeman, A, 1985, ‘Reading: its status and standing as a minor late Anglo-Saxon mint,’ *Berkshire Archaeol J* 72
(for 1983-85), 53–8
Moore, J and Jennings, D, 1992, *Reading Business Park: a Bronze Age landscape*, Thames Valley Landscapes:
the Kennet Valley, vol 1, Oxford Archaeol Unit
Morgan, P, 1979, *Domesday Book 5: Berkshire*, Chichester
HMSO
RBLP, 1995, *Reading Borough Local Plan*, Reading Borough Council, Reading
Slade, C F, 2001 *The town of Reading and its Abbey*, MRM Associates Ltd, Reading
VCH, 1972, *Victoria County History of Berkshire 3*, London
### APPENDIX 1: Sites and Monuments Records within a 250m search radius of the development site

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>SMR Ref</th>
<th>Grid Ref (SU)</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Period</th>
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<td>RD11260</td>
<td>717 732</td>
<td>Sherd</td>
<td>Roman</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>RD11310</td>
<td>719 732</td>
<td>Quern</td>
<td>Roman</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>RD11317</td>
<td>718 732</td>
<td>Dagger</td>
<td>Saxon/Medieval</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>4</td>
<td>RD11368</td>
<td>717 730</td>
<td>Pot</td>
<td>Medieval</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>RD11392</td>
<td>717 729</td>
<td>Coin</td>
<td>Medieval</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>RD15613</td>
<td>717 732</td>
<td>Building</td>
<td>19th C</td>
<td>2-4 London Street; Building Recording</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Quern</td>
<td>Medieval</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>RD15614</td>
<td>718 730</td>
<td>Quarry/pits, bronze working</td>
<td>medieval/post-medieval</td>
<td>67-73 London St; Evaluation and watching brief</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>RD15710</td>
<td></td>
<td>Pottery</td>
<td>Roman</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>RD15629</td>
<td>719 728</td>
<td>Defence ditch</td>
<td>Post-medieval</td>
<td>Civil war defences of town constructed in 1642: evaluation and excavation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>RD15632</td>
<td>72 72</td>
<td>Defence line</td>
<td>Post-medieval</td>
<td>Civil war defences of town constructed in 1642 (projected line)</td>
</tr>
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<td>10</td>
<td>RD15704</td>
<td>718 727</td>
<td>Defensive ditch and pits</td>
<td>Post-medieval</td>
<td>32-38 Silver St; evaluation and excavation</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Pottery</td>
<td>Roman</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>RD15706</td>
<td>718 729</td>
<td>Pits and gully</td>
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<td>96-102 London Street: evaluation</td>
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<td>12</td>
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<td>717 728</td>
<td>evaluation</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>RD3937</td>
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<td>church</td>
<td>Medieval</td>
<td>St Giles</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>RD6986</td>
<td>717 731</td>
<td>House</td>
<td>post-medieval 16th C</td>
<td>17-19 London Street</td>
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APPENDIX 2: Historic and modern maps consulted

1610    Speed’s Plan of Reading (Fig. 2)
1643    Civil War defences map (Fig. 3)
1722    Estate map (Fig. 4)
1761    Rocque’s Plan of the County of Berkshire (Fig. 5)
1802    Coate’s Plan of the Town of Reading (Fig. 6)
1834    Dormer’s Plan of the Town of Reading
1861-2  Simmon’s Plan of the Town of Reading
1879    First Edition Ordnance Survey Sheet XXXVII.3 (25") (Fig. 7)
1879    First Edition Ordnance Survey Sheet XXXVII.3 (6”)
1900    Ordnance Survey Sheet XXXVII.3
1912    Ordnance Survey Sheet XXXVII.3
1931    Ordnance Survey Sheet XXXVII.3 (Fig. 8)
1957    Ordnance Survey Sheet 7173 SE 1:1250
1958    Ordnance Survey Sheet 7172 NE 1:1250
1962    Ordnance Survey Sheet 7173 SE 1:1250
1967    Ordnance Survey Sheet 7173 SE 1:1250
1968    Ordnance Survey Sheet 7172 NE 1:1250
1982    Ordnance Survey Sheet 7172 NE 1:1250 (Fig. 9 upper)
1987    Ordnance Survey Sheet 7173 SE 1:1250 (Fig. 9 lower)
Figure 1. Location of site within Reading and Berkshire.

Reproduced from Ordnance Survey SU77SW at 1:5000
Ordnance Survey Licence AL52324A0001
Figure 2. John Speed’s map of Reading, 1610.
Figure 3. ‘Siege of Reading 1643’ from Slade 2001, showing Civil War defences.
Figure 4. Estate map 1722
Figure 5. Rocque’s map of Reading, 1761.
Figure 6. Coates map of Reading, 1802.
Kendrick School, East Street, Reading, Berkshire, 2003

Figure 7. Ordnance Survey, 1st edition 25” map 1879
Kendrick School, East Street, Reading, Berkshire, 2003

Figure 8. Ordnance Survey 1931.
Kendrick School, East Street, Reading, Berkshire, 2003

Figure 9. Ordnance Survey, 1:1250 1982 (top) and 1987
Kendrick School, East Street, Reading, Berkshire, 2003

Figure 10. Development proposals. Scale 1:500