Moat End, Mill Lane, Hurley, Berkshire

An Archaeological Watching Brief

For Ms H Alderton

by Steve Ford
Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code MEH04/85

October 2004
Summary

Site name: Moat End, Mill Lane, Hurley, Berkshire

Site code: MEH04/85

Grid reference: SU 8278 8399

Site activity: Watching brief

Date and duration of project: 5th October 2004

Project Manager: Steve Ford

Summary of results: No artefacts of archaeological interest were observed. A gravel dump deposit is not well dated but may relate to medieval use of the site.

Monuments identified: -

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

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Report 04/85

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out during the construction of an extension at Moat End, Mill Street, Hurley, Berkshire (SU 8278 8399) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr David Herbert of Danks Badnell, Kings Stables, 3-4 Osborne Mews, Windsor, Berkshire, SL4 3DE on behalf of Ms Alderton.

A planning consent (03/40676) has been granted by the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead to erect an extension to the rear of the existing house following demolition of an existing extension. The planning consent is subject to a condition relating to archaeology, which requires a watching brief to be carried out during groundworks. The site lies within the boundaries of Hurley Priory, a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM 19020) and consent has been granted by the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport for the works. This is in accordance with the Ancient Monuments and Scheduled Areas Act (1979), the Department of the Environment’s Planning Policy Guidance, Archaeology and Planning (PPG16 1990) and the Royal Borough’s policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Ms Fiona Macdonald, archaeological adviser to the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead and Mr Rob Perrin of English Heritage advising the Secretary of State.

The fieldwork was undertaken by Sean Wallis on 5th October 2004 and the site code is MEH04/85. The site archive is currently held by Thames Valley Archaeological Services, 47–49 De Beauvoir Road, Reading, RG1 5NR, but will be deposited with Reading Museum in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site lies on the northern side of Mill Lane towards the eastern margins of Hurley within the former grounds of the Priory. The existing extension was built on the north side of the house (Fig. 3). Geological maps indicate that the site lies on flood plain gravel though it is located close to the edge of the terrace with alluvium beyond to the north (BGS 1974). The site lies at c. 29m above Ordnance Datum.
Archaeological background

The site is situated within the eastern margins of the Scheduled Ancient Monument of Hurley Benedictine Priory (SAM 19020), which was founded in AD1086 by Geoffrey de Mandeville and was under the control of the Abbey of Westminster until its suppression in 1536, when the land passed into lay hands (Ford 1987). At Monks Garden, Mill Lane, a large ditch containing pottery dating to the mid 12th and 13th centuries was recorded. Two pits were also located; one of which was dated to the early 12th to late 13th century (Pine 1999a). Archaeological watching briefs carried out on the foundations and associated services of Abbey House, Mill Lane and foundation trenches for a new conservatory at that property failed to reveal any archaeological features though a sherd of Roman pottery was recovered (Huscroft 1999; Hammond 2000). To the north-east at Tuckenhay, the eastern boundary of the medieval settlement is defined by a moat. A watching brief revealed two substantial pits containing medieval pottery and animal bone, which date from 11th or 12th century. A residual sherd of Roman pottery was also recorded (Ford 2004). Archaeological watching briefs at Warren House, Lovelace Close (Ford 1996) and Ladye Place Boathouse, Mill Lane (Pine 1999b) did not record any archaeological deposits, while a watching brief at Florence House, on the High Street just to the west of the scheduled area located a large medieval pit (Pine 2004).

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the watching brief was to observe, excavate and fully record any archaeological deposits present and to establish dating and phasing for any features present on the site. This would involve the monitoring of the digging of foundation trenches for the new extensions and the inspection of a soakaway pit.

Results

The foundation trench for the extension were 0.60m wide and were 1.0–1.3m deep. The stratigraphy observed in the trench typically consisted of a topsoil to a depth of 0.35m. This overlay an orange-brown sandy clay subsoil to a depth of 1.0m. This in turn overlay a light orange-brown sandy clay. No natural gravel was observed and the lower parts of the trench revealed either alluvium or possibly a brick earth cap to the gravel. The western margins of the extension area coincided with the former location of the demolished extension and the upper levels here were disturbed and the old footings were encountered.
For the western part of the site, at a depth of between 0.65m and 1.0m, a gravel spread was observed which contained tiny fragments of brick/tile as the only dating evidence and appears to be a dump layer (Fig. 4). It is possible that this relates to construction of Moat End but its stratigraphic position beneath the clayey subsoil might indicate that it is of earlier, perhaps medieval origin.

The soakaway was 2m by 1.5m and 1.5m deep and was located about 7m north of the garage (Fig. 3). The stratigraphy comprised turf and topsoil to a depth of 0.4m, an orange/ brown sandy clay subsoil to a depth of 1m and a light brown sandy clay to the base of the pit. No finds or archaeological deposits were observed.

The pipe trench joining the soakaway with the new extension was relatively shallow and set within the subsoil.

**Conclusion**

The watching brief has not clearly revealed any finds or deposits of archaeological interest on this occasion. However, the origin and date of a gravel dump deposit at the western end of the site are unclear and this could conceivably relate to medieval use of the site.

**References**

Hammond, S, 2000, ‘Abbey House, Mill Lane, Hurley, an archaeological watching brief’, Thames Valley Archaeological Services report 00/23, Reading
Pine, J 1999a, ‘Monks Garden, Mill Lane, Hurley, an archaeological watching brief’, Thames Valley Archaeological Services report 98/83, Reading
Pine, J 2004, Florence House, High Street, Hurley, Thames Valley Archaeological Services report 04/52, Reading
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Figure 1. Location of site within Hurley and Berkshire.

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Figure 2. Location of site on Mill Lane, Hurley.

Scale 1:2500
Figure 3. Location of foundation trenches examined.
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topsoil

orange-brown sandy clay

gravel with brick/tile fragments and brown sandy clay

light orange-brown sandy clay

base of trench

Figure 4. Representative section of western end of foundation trench.