Rivergate, Southlea Road, Datchet, Berkshire

An Archaeological Watching Brief

For Mr and Mrs A Swinnerton

by Sarah Coles

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code RSD 04/23

April 2004
Summary

Site name: Rivergate, Southlea Road, Datchet, Berkshire

Grid reference: SU 9870 7657

Site activity: Watching Brief

Date and duration of project: 2nd March to 7th April 2004

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Sarah Coles

Site code: RSD 04/23

Area of site: 0.2ha

Summary of results: No archaeology was observed and no finds retrieved

Monuments identified: None

Location and reference of archive: The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with Reading Museum in due course.

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Steve Preston 14.04.04
Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at Rivergate, Southlea Road, Datchet, Slough, Berkshire (SU 9870 7657) (Figs 1 and 2). The work was commissioned by Mr James Mather of Johnston and Mather, Essex Lodge, Barnes High Street, London, SW13 0LW on behalf of Mr and Mrs A Swinnerton.

A planning consent (03/83239) has been granted on appeal (APP/T0355/A/03/1117826) by the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, to erect a single storey extension. The consent is subject to a condition relating to archaeology which requires a watching brief to be carried out during ground works.

This is in accordance with 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 Mr Kev Beachus, Senior Archaeologist of Babtie Group who advised the Royal Borough on archaeological matters. The fieldwork was undertaken by Sarah Coles on the 2nd of March and the 7th April the site code is 04/23.

The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at Reading Museum in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site is a rectangular plot of land located on the west side of Southlea Road and on the east bank of the Thames at Datchet. The site lies on a relatively level parcel of land with a slight slope from the northern boundary up towards the house. The geology is flood-plain gravel (BGS 1978). The site lies at approximately 18m above Ordnance Datum.

Archaeological background

The Thames Valley is considered archaeologically rich in both prehistoric and historic times, with a wealth of finds being dredged from the Thames, numerous sites recorded from the air, and numerous sites recorded from archaeological monitoring of development (Ford 1987; Gates 1975, Foreman et al. 2002). A large complex of
deposits representing levelled Bronze Age round barrows, Iron Age or Roman enclosure, field systems and boundary features is recorded just to the south-east of the site at Southlea (Gates 1975, map 30). The margins of the river are favoured locations for prehistoric occupation and the site therefore lies in an area of potential archaeological interest.

**Objectives and methodology**

The purpose of the watching brief was to excavate and record any archaeological deposits affected by the new construction work. This was to involve examination of areas of topsoil stripping, landscaping, removal of existing foundations, ground reduction and the digging of trenches for foundations and services. All spoilheaps were to be monitored for finds.

**Results**

Three phases of ground intrusive works were carried out at the site; replacement of a boundary wall, a trench for services and trenches for the footings of the new extension.

The old boundary wall fronting onto Southlea Road was removed and a trench dug in the same location for a new wall (Fig. 3). The trench was 0.80m wide by 0.60m deep and 50m long. The stratigraphy in this trench showed 0.35m of topsoil onto a mid brown sandy gravel. No archaeological deposits were observed.

A single service trench was dug which was 0.30m wide by 0.40m deep (Fig. 3). This showed a uniform layer of topsoil above gravel. No archaeological deposits were observed.

All of the foundations associated with the guestroom and en-suite bathroom were examined (Fig. 3). The trenches were 0.75m wide by 1.20m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.30m of topsoil onto numerous dumps of made ground, some of which contained brick rubble, onto a mid grey yellow clay. The latter material is not thought either to be an alluvial deposit nor solid bedrock but is a dump deposit. No archaeological deposits were observed.

**Finds**

No finds were recovered of archaeological interest. Modern finds associated with the dump deposits were not retained.
**Conclusion**

No archaeological features or finds were found during this watching brief. It would appear that the area of the house and to the immediate north has been filled and levels raised presumably to prevent flooding. The foundations of the new guestroom and en-suite bathroom showed dump deposits and the original ground surface was not exposed. Areas of trench digging observed closer to Southlea Road showed the natural geology but without revealing any deposits of archaeological interest.

**References**

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Figure 1. Location of site within Datchet and Berkshire.

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Figure 2. Location of site within Datchet and Berkshire.

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Figure 3. Detailed location of extension