Woodside, 90 Camp Road, Gerrards Cross, Buckinghamshire

An Archaeological Watching Brief

For Mr and Mrs Heywood

By Steve Ford and Andy Taylor
Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code WGC 01/55

March 2002
Summary

Site name: Woodside, 90 Camp Road, Gerrards Cross, Buckinghamshire

Grid reference: SU 9950 8802

Site activity: Watching Brief

Date and duration of project: 7th June 2001, 10th and 18th January 2002

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisors: John Saunders, Sarah Coles, Andy Taylor

Site code: WGC 01/55

Area of site:

Summary of results: No archaeological deposits were noted

Monuments identified: None

Location and reference of archive: the site archive is presently held by Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd, 47-49 De Beauvoir Road, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 5NR and will be deposited with Buckinghamshire Museum Service in due course.
Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at Woodside, 90 Camp Road, Gerrards Cross, Buckinghamshire (SU 9950 8802) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mrs Denise Heywood, of Woodside, 90 Camp Road, Gerrards Cross, Buckinghamshire HP29 2SE. Planning permission (99/00925/FUL) has been granted for the demolition of an existing house and garage and the construction of a new dwelling and landscaping of the garden of a property which included part of the Scheduled Ancient Monument of Bulstrode Camp, an Iron Age hillfort (Bucks SAM no. 11). The planning permission was subject to a condition for an archaeological watching brief to take place during groundworks. This was in accordance with the Department of the Environment’s Planning Policy Guidance, *Archaeology and Planning* (PPG16 1990), the District policies on archaeology. As the landscaping of the garden area was to take place within the Scheduled Monument, in accordance with the provisions of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act (1979), Scheduled Monument Consent was required for the latter works, in addition to the conditional planning permission. This Consent was granted by Ms A R Middleton of the Department of Culture, Media and Sport, acting on behalf of the Secretary of State, subject to a condition requiring archaeological supervision of the works.

A specification for the watching brief was approved by Ms Julia Wise, Archaeological Officer of Buckinghamshire County Council and Matthew Bodley of English Heritage. The fieldwork was undertaken by John Saunders on the 7th June 2001, Sarah Coles on 10th January 2002 and Andy Taylor on 18th January 2002 and the site code is WGC 01/55. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services but will be transferred to Buckinghamshire County Museum Service in due course, bearing the accession code AYBCM: 2002.15.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located on the western edge of Bulstrode Camp, an Iron Age hillfort, and lies on the western side of Gerrards Cross. (Fig. 1). The site itself lies partially within the ditch on the edge of the hillfort (Fig. 2), at a height of c.52m above Ordnance Datum and the underlying geology is glacial sand and gravel (BGS 1990).
Archaeological background

Bulstrode Camp is a large, multivallate hillfort enclosing an area of c.11ha of the hilltop, with the ramparts following the contours of the hill producing an oval ground plan. The hillfort dates to the Iron Age period although no fieldwork has been carried out on the site to confirm the date and duration of occupation. Some hillforts in Southern England such as Danebury in Hampshire (Cunliffe and Poole 1991) were densely occupied over a long period of time, whereas others, such as Winklebury, Basingstoke (Smith 1977) were much less intensively used and may have served primarily as fortified stock enclosures.

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the watching brief was to excavate and record any archaeological deposits which would be damaged or destroyed during groundworks for the new structures. The watching brief was also to monitor tree planting during landscaping of the garden area within the area of the scheduled monument.

Results

The initial site visit of 7th June 2001 noted that the groundworks had been completed for the new structures and the foundation and service trenches were not available for inspection. A spoilheap present on the site was monitored for finds. Part of the new building work had truncated a bank which is thought to be a part of the hillfort. However, an attempt to examine and record the exposed section and retrieve finds was not possible as a new retaining wall had already been constructed and was butting up against the section.

Shrub planting within the garden area was monitored on both the 10th and 18th January 2002 (Fig. 3). The first of these visits noted that soil had been brought in to raise the level by 0.25m before planting began. The holes that were dug measured between 0.15m and 0.20m deep and were thus not sufficiently deep to penetrate the original topsoil layer. The second visit saw the planting of shrubs along the rear boundary of the site. These holes were dug using either a spade or mattock and again measured between 0.15m and 0.20m and only dug into topsoil with a gravelly subsoil occasionally visible.

Finds

Occasional fragments of post-medieval brick and tile were noted in the topsoil during the monitoring of the planting activity and on the spoilheap of the construction work but these were not retained.
Conclusion

Monitoring of the foundation and service trenches for the new structures could not be carried out as these had already been completed and backfilled. The section of a truncated earthwork similarly could not be monitored due to the proximity of a retaining wall.

Planting of shrubs within the garden area of the Scheduled Monument part of the site was carried out as specified for the requirements of the Scheduled Monument Consent. Topsoil had been brought onto the site and the shrub planting was carried out with relatively little impact on the original topsoil and subsoil levels.

References


Woodside, 90 Camp Road, Gerrards Cross, Buckinghamshire, 2002

Figure 1. Location of site within Gerrards Cross and Buckinghamshire.

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Woodside, 90 Camp End Road, Gerrards Cross, Buckinghamshire, 2002

Figure 2. Location of site showing the ramparts of the hillfort and the previous structure.
Woodside, 90 Camp Road, Gerrards Cross, Buckinghamshire

Figure 3: Western part of site showing area of Scheduled Monument.

- Garage
- Pond
- Paved area
- Hillfort
- Lawn

Area inside rampart where ground level was raised by 0.25m and planting was observed.

Area of wall in front of partially truncated rampart

Western limit of Scheduled Monument

Line of ramparts

Figure 3: Western part of site showing area of Scheduled Monument.