

Baynards Park Estate, Ewhurst: results of recent archaeological work placed in its historical context

Introduction and background

Archaeology South-East (UCL Institute of Archaeology) was commissioned by CgMs Consulting Ltd, on behalf of their client the late Mr Alan Bristow, to undertake an archaeological excavation in advance of the construction of a new dwelling at Baynards Park. The site is centred on TQ 08517 36824, *c* 4km to the south-east of Cranleigh, just over the parish boundary in Ewhurst (fig 1).

The aims of the archaeological investigation were to record and date any features relating to the ruined remains of the former mansion and particularly those of the original Elizabethan manor house, and to place these within current understanding of landscape development.

The site is located on a level spur at a height of *c* 65m OD on the site of the former mansion, which is set within 560ha of parkland. The underlying geology according to the British Geological Survey Sheet 301 is Wealden Clay with local sandstone outcrops.

Background

This summary is based on the documentary research carried out by the late Christopher Phillpotts (2009). Although the estate pattern of southern Surrey formed in the late Saxon period, there are no Anglo-Saxon charters extant that refer to Baynards or its surrounding settlements and estates, and it does not feature in the Domesday Book in 1086 (Blair 1991; Sawyer 1968). At this time, King William I held the estates of Shere and Gomshall (Williams & Martin 2002, 72–3), and it is from these, through a complicated manorial history, that the Baynards estate evolved.

The name Baynards is associated with a tenant, Philip Baynard, in a lease of 1407 and possibly an earlier Henry Baynard was active in Bramley in the 1330s (Lewis 1894, 101–4). The park was formed under a licence granted to William Sydney in 1447 to impark 800 acres of land adjoining his manor of Baynards (*CalChR*, 98; the original grant at TNA: C 53/189 m10 no 12 contains no further detail).

In 1587, Baynards was purchased by George More of Loseley, who built a mansion here to serve as his dwelling during his father's lifetime. A detailed description of this phase of the history of the site can be found in an article by Judie English (2002).

The house underwent a series of alterations, extensions and restorations throughout the first half of the 19th century (English 2002, 58–60). According to plans made in 1971 parts of the original 16th century fabric survived within the Victorian building in some exterior walls at the west end of the mansion (*ibid*, fig 2). However, the building was entirely re-windowed and re-roofed in the 1830s, and the interior was completely remodelled. In 1965 the house changed ownership for the last time and suffered irreparable damage by fire in 1979. An application for demolition of the ruins was subsequently granted by Waverley Borough Council.

Archaeological findings

In August 2008, archaeological investigations were carried out ahead of redevelopment. Topsoil and overburden, including a deposit of ash and charcoal resulting from the 1979 fire were carefully removed with a mechanical excavator. Close investigation and recording of the remains followed. For safety reasons this did not include examination of the cellars.

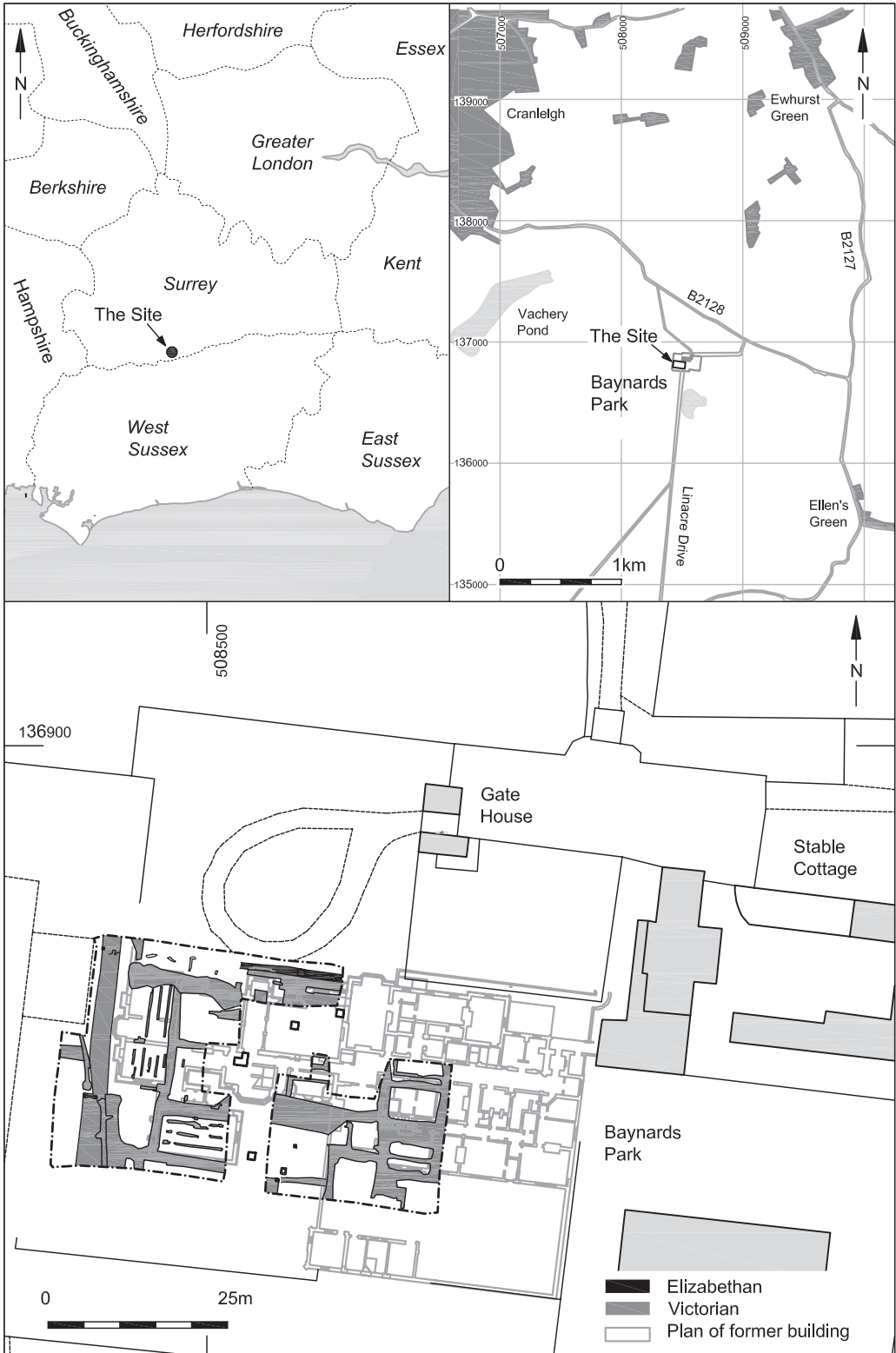


Fig 1 Baynards Park Estate, Ewhurst. Site location plan. (© Crown copyright Ordnance Survey. All rights reserved)

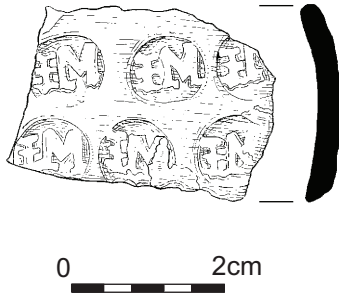


Fig 2 Baynards Park Estate, Ewhurst. Sherd of earthenware pottery jar with multiple impressed stamps bearing initials IM.

A number of Victorian internal wall foundations were identified, but no traces of 16th century masonry were found. Around the edge of the building, a deposit of crushed red brick and tile clearly defined the western extent of the Victorian house. No evidence for any medieval occupation at the site was identified.

The only trace of earlier activity was recorded at the northern end of the site beyond the footprint of the mansion. Here a vertically-sided, flat-based feature was recorded. This was *c* 14m long, 0.18m deep and *c* 1m wide. This was square-sided and so is unlikely to be the remains of a ditch, but may represent a foundation cut for a wall pertaining to the house, or perhaps of a masonry garden feature beyond it. As such it may be taken as evidence of the Elizabethan house itself, or of the garden, but no clearer idea of its function can be deduced.

The infilled material within this feature contained a few fragments of crushed ceramic building materials (CBM), stone fragments and pottery. Four sherds of mid-16th to 17th century pottery were recovered. Two are green glazed white/off-white Borderware-type sherds and a third is from a finely produced glazed red earthenware vessel. The most interesting sherd is a piece of local oxidised hard-fired earthenware jar with a thick internal dark green/black glaze and multiple impressed stamps on its unglazed exterior surface (fig 2). The oval stamps, arranged in close-set rows, bear the initials IM in relief at their centres. Pottery of this period is not frequently stamped by the maker although examples are known from Shoreham (Barber 2011) and stamps are quite well known from rural potters in both West Sussex (Aldsworth & Down 1990) and east Hampshire (Haslam 1975). The CBM was consistent with a 16th–17th century date although some of the tiles may be a little earlier.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeology South-East (ASE) would like to thank Richard Meager of CgMs Consulting Ltd and their client the late Mr Alan Bristow for commissioning and funding the work. The site archive has been offered to Godalming Museum and will be retained by ASE under site code BCP08 until deposition is agreed.

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