

**St Michael's Grange, Osborne Lane,
Warfield, Berkshire**

An Archaeological Evaluation

for Mrs Clare Moulder

by Richard Oram

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code SMG06/27

March 2006

Summary

Site name: St Michael's Grange, Osborne Lane, Warfield, Berkshire.

Grid reference: SU 8743 7152

Site activity: Evaluation

Date and duration of project: 10th March 2006

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Richard Oram

Site code: SMG06/27

Area of site: c. 1200 sq m

Summary of results: No archaeology was found

Monuments identified: None

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

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Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford✓ 16.03.06
	Steve Preston✓ 16.03.06

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Report 06/27

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out at St Michael's Grange, Osborne Lane, Warfield, Berkshire (SU 8743 7152) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mrs Clare Moulder, of St Michael's Grange, Osborne Lane, Warfield RG42 6ED.

Planning permission (app. no. 05/01157/FUL) has been sought from Bracknell Forest District Council for the construction of a menage of 1200 sq m area. In order to inform the planning process, a programme of archaeological field evaluation has been required by Berkshire Archaeology, advisers to the District Council.

This is in accordance with the Department of the Environment's Planning Policy Guidance, *Archaeology and Planning* (PPG16 1990), and the District Council's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr David Thomason, Archaeology Officer with Berkshire Archaeology. The fieldwork was undertaken by Richard Oram and Ceri Falys on the 10th March 2006 and the site code is SMG06/27. 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 located to the east of Osborne Lane, on land to the north of St Michael's Grange, Warfield, near Bracknell (Fig. 1). The menage site comprises a rectangular parcel of land within the grounds of the Grade II listed 15th-century Hall. The ground slopes gently down towards the north and is currently in use as an area to exercise horses. The geology is mapped as London clay (BGS 1981) and this was observed on site. The site lies at approximately 57m above Ordnance Datum.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site has been highlighted in a brief for the project prepared by Mr David Thomason of Berkshire Archaeology from information within the Berkshire Sites and Monuments Record. In summary, the site lies within the grounds of a 15th-century grange and it is possible that associated deposits of late medieval or early post-medieval date are present in the vicinity. In more general terms, the site lies within an

area from which field survey has revealed various flint finds of earlier prehistoric date (Ford 1987) and an Iron Age pit is also recorded. A Middle Iron Age settlement at Fairclough Farm to the south of the site was subject to an excavation prior to development of that area for housing (Torrance and Durden 2003). The broader area is also generally rich in medieval and early post-medieval remains. However, nothing of archaeological interest was observed during a watching brief at Newell Green Farm, just to the south of the site (Wallis 2005).

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the evaluation was to determine the presence/absence, extent, condition, character, quality and date of any archaeological deposits within the area of development. The specific research aims of this project are:

To determine if archaeologically relevant levels have survived on this site.

To determine if archaeological deposits of any period are present.

To determine if any deposits of medieval or early post-medieval date are present associated with the nearby grange.

In total four trenches, each nominally 11m long and 1.6m wide were excavated, three in the proposed development area and one further trench to the south of the Hall along the line of a proposed driveway (Fig. 3). The trenches were opened using a JCB-type machine with a toothless ditching bucket to remove topsoil and overburden under constant archaeological supervision. The spoil heaps were constantly monitored for finds and any suspected features were hand cleaned.

A complete list of trenches giving lengths, breadths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1.

Results

Trench 1

This trench was excavated in the area of the proposed menage and was 11.3m long, 0.4m deep and aligned WNW–ESE. It was opened through 0.24m of topsoil onto 0.16m of yellow/brown silty clay subsoil. This overlay the orange red gravelly clay geology. No features were observed in this trench and no finds of interest were found in its spoil.

Trench 2 (Plate 1)

This trench was also in the proposed menage area and was 11.9m long, 0.46m deep and aligned NW–SE. Its stratigraphy consisted of 0.29m of topsoil overlaying 0.16m of yellow brown silty clay that in turn overlay the orange red clay natural. No archaeological features were noted in this trench.

Trench 3

This trench was excavated in the area of the proposed menage and was 11.1m long, 0.5m deep and aligned NE–SW. It was opened through 0.3m of topsoil onto 0.19m of yellow brown silty clay subsoil. This overlay the orange red gravelly clay natural. No features were observed in this trench and no finds of interest were found in its spoil.

Trench 4 (Plate 2)

This trench was excavated to the south of St Michael’s Grange along the route of a proposed driveway and was 10.7m long, 0.5m deep and aligned north–south. It was excavated through 0.4m of topsoil onto 0.1m of yellow brown silty clay subsoil. This overlay the orange red gravelly clay natural. Two parallel curved gullies were observed along the length of the trench but these were seen to be cut through the topsoil and are therefore modern. It is probable that these are wheel ruts from an earlier driveway in this location.

Finds

No finds of archaeological interest were recovered in this evaluation

Conclusion

In total four trenches were excavated in this evaluation with three of them located within the proposed development area and the remaining trench located on the south side of St Michael’s Grange, all within the current garden area of this house. None of the trenches contained archaeological deposits or features and no finds of archaeological date were recovered from the spoil heaps. The topsoil is very uniform on this site and there is little subsoil.

References

BGS, 1981, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50000, Sheet 269, Solid and Drift Edition, Keyworth

- Ford, S, 1987, *East Berkshire Archaeological Survey*, Berkshire County Council Dept Highways and Planning Occas Pap **1**, Reading
- PPG16, 1990, *Archaeology and Planning*, DoE Planning Policy Guidance note 16, (HMSO).
- Torrance, L and Durden, T, 2003, 'A middle Iron Age settlement at Fairclough Farm, Bracknell, 1994' in S Preston (ed), *Prehistoric, Roman and Saxon sites in Eastern Berkshire*, TVAS Monogr **2**, Reading, 98–107
- Wallis, S, 2005, 'Newell Green Farm, Newell Green, Bracknell, Berkshire; an archaeological watching brief', Thames Valley Archaeological Services rep 05/43, Reading

APPENDIX 1: Trench details
 0m at S or W end

<i>Trench No.</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1	11.3	1.6	0.4	0-0.24m topsoil, onto 0.24-0.4m yellow brown silty clay subsoil onto 0.4m+ orange red clay natural.
2	11.9	1.6	0.46	0-0.29m topsoil, onto 0.29-0.45m yellow brown silty clay subsoil onto 0.45-0.46m+ orange red clay natural. [Plate 1]
3	11.1	1.6	0.50	0-0.30m topsoil, onto 0.30-0.49m yellow brown silty clay subsoil onto 0.49-0.5m+ orange red clay natural.
5	10.7	1.6	0.5	0-0.40m topsoil, onto 0.40-0.49m yellow brown silty clay subsoil onto 0.49-0.5m+ orange red clay natural. [Plate 2]

