

**Studio House, School Lane, Cookham,  
Berkshire**

**An Archaeological Watching Brief**

**For Mrs J Lowes**

by James McNicoll-Norbury  
Thames Valley Archaeological Services  
Ltd

Site Code SSC 09/36

**June 2009**

## Summary

**Site name:** Studio House, School Lane, Cookham, Berkshire

**Grid reference:** SU8952 8522

**Site activity:** Watching Brief

**Date and duration of project:** 17th June – 22nd June 2009

**Project manager:** Steve Ford

**Site supervisor:** James McNicoll-Norbury

**Site code:** SSC 09/36

**Summary of results:** No archaeological deposits or artefacts were identified

**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 ✓ 30.06.09 Jo Pine ✓ 30.06.09
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# **Studio House, School Lane, Cookham, Berkshire An Archaeological Watching Brief**

by James McNicoll-Norbury

**Report 09/36**

## **Introduction**

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at Studio House, School Lane, Cookham, Berkshire, SL6 9QJ (SU 8952 8522) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mrs Janet Lowes of Studio House, School Lane, Cookham, Berkshire, SL6 9QL.

Planning consent (08/02952) has been granted by the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead for the construction of a small extension and a garage on the site. The consent gained is subject to a condition relating to archaeology which requires a watching brief to be carried out during groundworks.

This is in accordance with the Department of the Environment's Planning Policy Guidance, *Archaeology and Planning* (PPG16 1990), and the Borough's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Ms Fiona MacDonald Principle Archaeologist of Berkshire Archaeology. The fieldwork was undertaken by Tim Dawson and James McNicoll-Norbury between the 17<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2009 and the site code is SSC 09/36.

This document reports on the extension carried out at this time. Construction of the garage is now unlikely to take place. 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 in the historic core of Cookham on School Lane which lies between High Street (B4447) and Sutton Road (A4094) 350m south of the parish church and the River Thames (Fig. 2). The site is currently in use as a residential property with gardens to the front and back of the house. The underlying geology is described as Shepperton Gravel (BGS 2005) which was observed (as sand) in the exposed groundworks and the site lies at *c.* 26m Above Ordnance Datum.

## **Archaeological background**

The archaeological potential of the site has been highlighted in a brief for the project provided by Berkshire Archaeology. In summary this potential stems from its location within the archaeologically rich Thames Valley

with a wealth of prehistoric and later archaeological finds recorded for the area (Ford 1987, Gates 1975). More specifically the site lies within the historic core of Cookham which is thought to have middle Saxon origins and have a minster church by the 8<sup>th</sup> Century AD (Astill 1978). Cookham had borough status until eclipsed by Maidenhead, following the building of the bridge across the Thames. The proposal site lies approximately 350m south of the medieval parish church which is considered to be the historic focus of the settlement, though recent fieldwork at Spencers, on The Pound to the west which revealed Saxon deposits, has complicated what was thought to be known about the early topography of the settlement (Mundin 2008). A pit of uncertain date, but containing a prehistoric flint flake, was recorded during a watching brief at Thyme Cottage, immediately north west of the current site (Ford 2005) and fieldwork to the north at Bridge House on Ferry Lane has revealed an early medieval ditch and Saxon pottery (McNicol-Norbury 2009).

## **Objectives and methodology**

The aims of the project were to excavate and record any archaeological deposits affected by the groundworks. This involved examination of all areas of intrusive groundworks, in particular ground reduction and the digging of foundation trenches for the new extensions and any service runs. Archaeological deposits that were threatened by the groundworks were to be excavated and recorded and all finds to be retained and spoilheaps were monitored for additional finds.

## **Results**

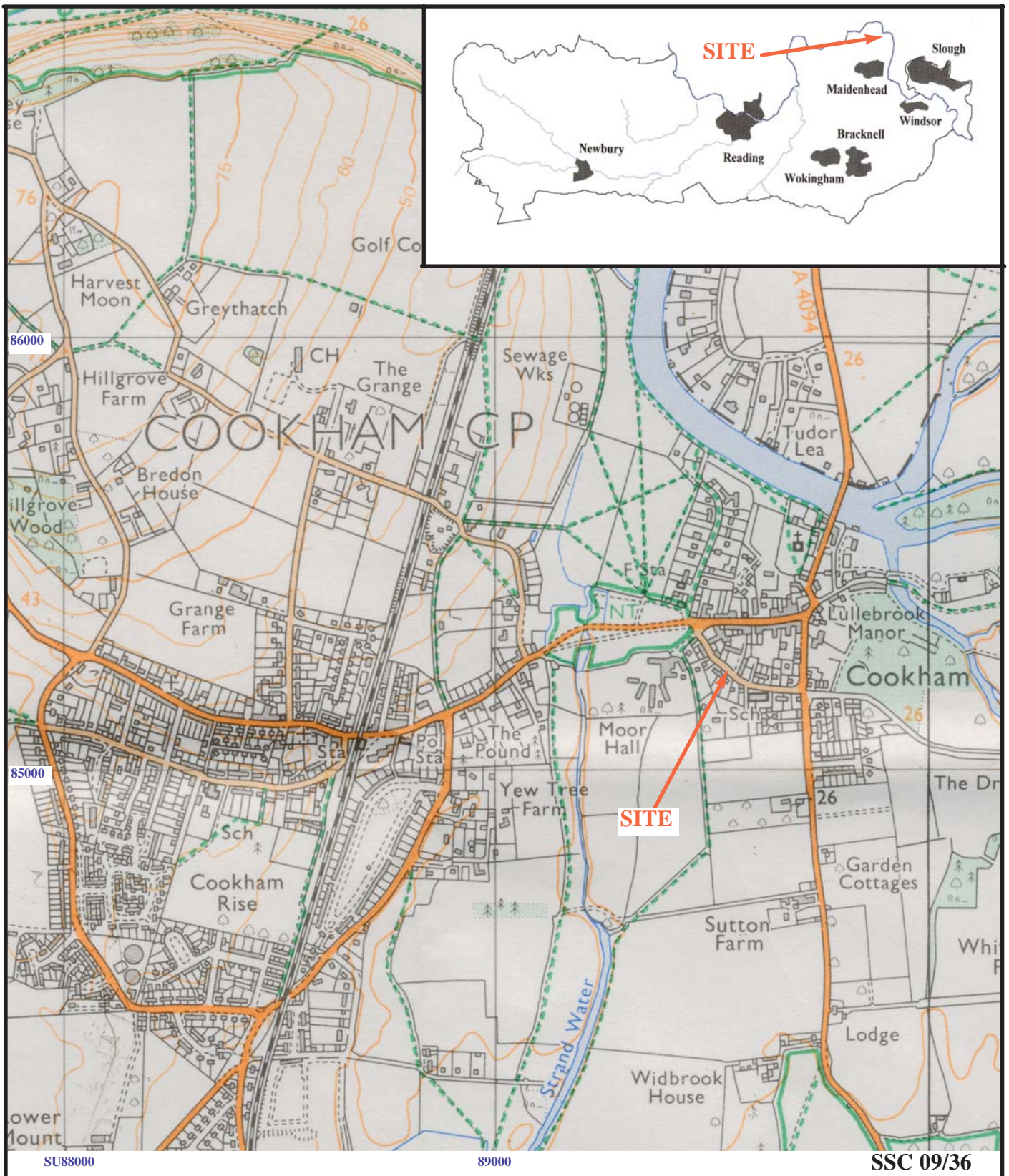
The intrusive groundworks were dug by hand and reduced to a depth of 1.63m and a width of 0.50m (Fig. 3). No ground reduction of the interior of the extension took place. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.10m paving slabs above 0.56m of dark grey clay subsoil which in turn overlay orange/brown compact sand to the base of the foundation trench adjacent to the eastern edge of the existing building (Fig. 4). No archaeological deposits were observed nor finds recovered within the foundation trench.

## **Conclusion**

No archaeological deposits were identified during the course of the watching brief despite the site lying in the historic core of Cookham and despite the presence of a possible prehistoric pit in the property next door (Ford 2005). Recent small scale projects in the village, such as this, have been surprisingly productive, but not on this occasion.

## References

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- McNicoll-Norbury, J, 2009, Bridge House, Ferry Lane, Cookham, Berkshire, Thames Valley Archaeological Services Report 09/56, Reading
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- PPG 16, 1990, *Archaeology and Planning*, Dept of the Environment Planning Policy Guidance 16, HMSO



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Figure 1. Location of site within Cookham and Berkshire.

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Figure 2. Detailed location of site within Cookham.

Scale 1:2500

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Figure 3. Location of foundation trench for extension.



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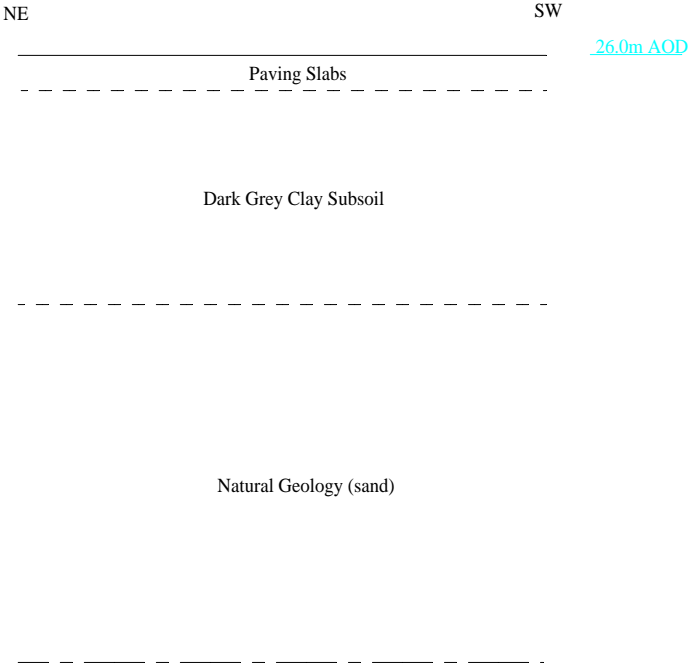


Figure 4. Representative Section