

EXTENSIVE URBAN SURVEY
of
SURREY

EPSOM



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EXTENSIVE URBAN SURVEY EPSOM

INTRODUCTION

Extensive Urban Surveys have been undertaken or are presently being undertaken in a number of English counties as part of a wide ranging English Heritage initiative (English Heritage 1992). Surrey, in common with many other counties, had a survey of its historic towns carried out almost thirty years ago (O'Connell 1977), as a result of an initiative by the Inspectorate of Ancient Monuments (then part of the Department of the Environment). This survey has formed a basis and background for archaeological work in towns throughout the ensuing period, but is now in urgent need of replacement to reflect current knowledge and planning concerns (Poulton & Bird 1998).

The present survey is intended to provide an up-to-date view of the archaeological resource in each of the towns studied and consists of three phases: data collection, data assessment and strategy. The first stage, data collection, incorporates the acquisition of new data and its amalgamation with existing knowledge of the history and archaeology of the town. The data is acquired in a form suitable for its incorporation into the Surrey Sites and Monuments Record. The data assessment phase of the survey leads to the production of this report which presents a history of the town, an analysis of the plan of the town, an assessment of the archaeological and buildings data and the state of modern development resulting in the identification of areas of archaeological importance. Information about the development of the town through the ages, including analysis of its plan and the identified areas of archaeological importance, is also presented in a series of maps at the end of the report. The Strategy phase of the survey, uses the information presented in the Data Assessment combined with current statutory and non-statutory constraints, and present and future planning policy to make recommendations for policies regarding the historic environment. The policies may be incorporated into Local and Unitary Development Plans, non-statutory policies, supplementary guidance and for use within development control (Hampshire County Council 1997, 1).

The project faced a clear difficulty in knowing which towns to include, as there seems to be no agreed definition. Historically, towns in Surrey have always been small because of the proximity of London and the generally poor quality of the County's land for agriculture. This fact is masked now by the considerable expansion of many towns and villages following the coming of the railway in the later 19th century. The main problem, in the absence of an absolute measure, is in deciding where to draw the line. This ought, in principle, to be established by comparing the evidence from towns, as defined by O'Connell (1977), and that from other large settlements or villages.

Unfortunately archaeological investigation of Surrey's towns has been relatively limited in scope, and villages have been even less well served. In these circumstances comparisons are rather hard to draw. The evidence from the villages is consistent with that of the towns in suggesting that their development belongs to the period from the 12th/13th century onwards. Surrey's towns are not, generally, greatly different from the villages in the quantity of evidence they produce and this is undoubtedly because they differ little in size. The town, with its market, had an economic status denied to the village, but in Surrey all the inhabitants of both lived in immediate proximity to their fields. There was probably the same lack of distinction between town and village in the medieval period as there is in their excavated evidence or plans revealed today.

In these circumstances it seemed best to adopt an inclusive approach and deal with all the more substantial medieval settlements which have indications of nucleation ('nucleated' settlements have houses run together and signs of developed backlands). Epsom is in fact a special case since, alone among Surrey towns, it was transformed in the early post-medieval period, with its development as a spa. This era in itself justifies its inclusion in the EUS, but there are also strong hints that it had already become nucleated in the medieval period.

The study area is that of the spa town as defined by fig 6, that is the extent of the built-up area as indicated by the earliest large scale maps, such as that of Rocque (fig 2) and the 1840 Tithe map (fig 3). Finds of interest and importance are known from the near vicinity, and have been taken account of, but are not thought to relate to the nucleated settlement of any date.

General note on maps and mapping

A standard set of historic maps was consulted in compiling all reports for the Surrey EUS. The Senex and Rocque maps were consulted in Ravenhill 1974, while all enclosure, tithe, and historic Ordnance Survey maps were examined in the map collections of the Surrey History Centre, Woking. Further references are not given for these maps where they are mentioned below. Where other maps are referred to a reference is given.

All map bases for the maps used in the figures are those of the modern Ordnance Survey, unless otherwise stated, and the data forms a GIS overlay to the Ordnance Survey maps.

Abbreviations used

EUS	Extensive Urban Survey
GIS	Geographic Information Systems
OS	Ordnance Survey
SCAU	Surrey County Archaeological Unit
SMR	Sites and Monuments Record
SHS	Surrey History Service
SyAC	<i>Surrey Archaeological Collections</i>
SyAS Bull	<i>Surrey Archaeological Society's Bulletin</i>
VCH	<i>Victoria County History of Surrey</i>

LOCATION AND TOPOGRAPHY

The medieval manor and parish of Epsom (fig 1) was one of a series of 'strip' manors on this side of the North Downs, all of which were narrower from east to west than north to south, ensuring that each had a varied terrain and agricultural resources. It ran from the North Downs (at its south end) down the dip slope and across the Thanet and Reading Beds (the spring line) and northwards onto the heavy London Clay. The medieval village and later Spa was next to the spring line and was one of a series of nucleated settlements linked by an east-west road (now mostly followed by the A24) along the foot of the dip slope. The streams rose only in winter, however, and Epsom mill lay on the Hogsmill River, rising in Ewell village, which had sufficient vigour to power a series of mills in Ewell Parish, from at least the late Saxon period onwards.

There has been considerable development in and around Epsom in the 19th and 20th century, leading to many new developments and new roads. The village centre lies some 9km south of Kingston upon Thames, 2.5km from Ewell, and 6km from Leatherhead.

PAST WORK AND THE NATURE OF THE EVIDENCE

Epsom was a small medieval settlement which saw considerable growth and development as a spa town in the 17th and 18th centuries, and in connection with Epsom races in the 18th and 19th centuries. There is a comparatively substantial body of historical information for the latter periods, but surprisingly little archaeological information. The evidence for the earlier periods is generally limited, especially in comparison with its near neighbour, Ewell. The purpose of the present section of the report is to provide a summary of the scope and character of the evidence, and to indicate something of its strengths and weaknesses, prior to the attempt in the ensuing section to use this data to create an account of the development of Epsom. The detailed information is confined to that directly relevant to the study area (fig 5) of the settlement, but material from the general vicinity is referred to as necessary.

Archaeology

Archaeological work in the Epsom study area has been very meagre indeed. Until recent years development was not accompanied by any formal archaeological investigation, and neither was there any significant amount of informal observation. A few recent developments have been accompanied by archaeological work, though this has produced little positive result, largely due to the unsuitability of the sites. It may not be surprising, then, that the area has revealed very little prehistoric material (Appendix). This type of location is one generally favourable to ancient settlement, and the paucity of material is in marked contrast to the plentiful discoveries in and around nearby Ewell. It is surely not coincidental that the only real finds, apart from highly visible Iron Age gold coins (SMR 1121 and 1151), come from one of the very few formal archaeological investigations (Robertson 1997, Appendix, item B).

There are no definite Roman finds from the study area and not much from the near vicinity, although Stane St passed to the south-east of the church.. It seems safe to assume, given the high visibility of Roman material, that there was no settlement of substance at this date, in contrast to nearby Ewell (Abdy & Bierton 1997; Orton 1997).

The quantity of medieval and post-medieval archaeological material is also surprisingly small, a situation which may be explained largely by the lack of formal work in the village centre.

Documents

The only written sources which refer to Epsom prior to 1086 (the date of Domesday Book) are brief and inconsequential. Neither is the later medieval documentary evidence detailed, and it includes no sources of particular value for an understanding of the topography and early development of the village. The Victoria County History account of Epsom (VCH 3, 271-8) is a useful summary of the evidence, and little of substance has been published since, though Blair's (1991) treatment of a number of issues in a wider context is worthy of note.

From the present perspective, though, a work of much greater importance is H L Lehmann's *The residential copyholds of Epsom* (1987). This book examines in detail the records of the manor of Epsom from 1663 up to the acquisition of the Manor by the Epsom and Ewell Council in 1925, and because of the importance of this source it is worth providing some detail of its content and character. The sources consist in the main of two sets of court rolls, the first covering the years 1663 to 1784, the second from 1717 to 1925. These court rolls record all transactions concerning copyhold properties ("held by copy of the court roll"), but not those relating to freehold properties. In addition to the court rolls there are two surveys of the manor, of 1680 and of 1755. These contain all properties belonging to the manor, copyholds and freeholds, commons and demesnes.

Both court rolls and surveys generally describe the properties by naming the owners of adjoining properties, and often give the area and a description of the property concerned. Where there is only an occasional freehold interspersed between copyholds it is possible to build up a continuous sequence of the properties. A sequence of properties can be discerned, but these sources do not supply exact locations, for which large-scale indexed maps are necessary. The earliest such map of Epsom is that of 1838, the result of a survey undertaken by order the guardians of the Epsom Union to the scale of 12 perches to 1 inch (1: 2276: PRO Kew, MH12/12235; a copy of this map is at the Bourne Hall Museum, Ewell). The properties in this map are numbered, but the corresponding rating list does not survive. The Tithe Award of 1842 uses the same map of 1838 with the same plot numbers, and provides owners' and occupiers' names for most of the properties, but frequently brackets a number of properties, sometimes as many as 30, together, thus making exact identification impossible. From 1842 onwards legislation provided for the enfranchisement of copyhold tenures, and a new set of records consisting of two Enfranchisement Books was started, which contain a number of large-scale plans. There also exists (SHC Woking 31/6) a set of large-scale plans of about 1850 (to the scale of 1: 500) in which entries were made up to the 1900s. From this complex of information Lehmann was able to trace the ownership and location of virtually every property in Epsom town from 1680, or earlier, onwards. The book divides Epsom into

fourteen areas, and each of the fourteen chapters is accompanied by a map. The book provides an excellent means of tracing the history of individual properties or of particular areas. Unfortunately the lack of an overall map, let alone one showing the town at each of the three key dates, makes it more difficult to appreciate the overall development of the town.

Cartography

The Rocque map of about 1768 (fig 2) is the earliest to survive at a scale large enough to gain some impression of the topography. A map drawn in 1838 at a scale of about 1:2276 is the earliest large scale plan of Epsom in existence, and is identical to that used by the Tithe commissioners in 1842 (fig 3: see above for some further details). There was only a trickle of new development by the time of the large scale OS maps of 1869-70, but thereafter change was rapid.

Buildings

The only surviving structure of medieval date is the church tower, of 15th century date, although drawings made before its rebuilding after 1824, show the largely 13th century character of the old church (White & Harte 1992, fig 14). The development of Epsom prior to its emergence as a spa town in the early to mid 17th century is very obscure. There was much new building as its fashionable status rose, and in the process all the early 17th century or earlier buildings have been lost. The social mix in Epsom came to differ radically from that elsewhere in Surrey (*VCH* 3, 272) and a large number of substantial buildings were created to accommodate the gentry who occupied 10% of the 400 houses of around 1800 (White & Harte 1992, Introduction, 5th page (not numbered)). A good number of these houses still survive, despite many losses in the 1960s and 1970s (White & Harte 1992, Introduction, 9th page (not numbered)).

General studies

It is the social history of Epsom's development during the period from around 1650 to around 1850 which has attracted the greatest attention (eg Horne 1971), and there is comparatively little on more specifically archaeological issues. An accessible treatment of 19th and 20th century developments in particular may be found in White & Harte 1992.

THE HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT OF EPSOM

The broad scope of the resources available for an account of the history of Epsom has been indicated by the preceding section. The following narrative should be read with the limitations of those resources in mind. It is concerned essentially with the area of the post-medieval town and its immediate surrounds prior to around 1850, but the more detailed analysis of the plan and its development is reserved for the next section.

Pre-medieval

The prehistoric and Roman evidence is so thin as to render its discussion pointless. The evidence for the Saxon era is also weak, but provides some context for later development. The place name (*Ebesham* and minor variants in pre-conquest sources (Gover *et al* 1934, 74) 'Ebbi's ham(m)') clearly indicates settlement from early in the Saxon period, as the name first occurs in a Chertsey Abbey charter of 725 (preserved only in a mid-13th century copy). Blair (1991, 45) argues that such names imply primary Saxon settlement along the line of the dip slope of the North Downs.

There is, however, very little evidence for the precise location of such settlement anywhere in Epsom manor. Horton, 'the dirty farm', is first mentioned in 1178 (Gover *et al* 1934, 74), but the name is of pre-conquest origin. The burials found alongside Stane St (Appendix SMR nos 1107 and 1118), even if definitely of Saxon date, do not necessarily help in determining the location of settlement since they could well be at some distance from a related settlement (cf Poulton 1987). Of greater potential relevance are the finds from Waterloo House (Appendix, item E), which include sherds of pottery dated to c900-1050,

within a layer described as an 'agricultural soil' (Sabel 2000, 15). The pottery is not quantified or further described or illustrated. By the conclusion of the report the finds have become 'considerable evidence of Saxon / Early medieval occupation'. With some caution, then, this may be accepted as evidence for late Saxon occupation in the near vicinity. Domesday Book shows that Epsom manor was a possession of Chertsey Abbey, and was reasonably prosperous, with two mills, 34 villeins and 4 bordars, and 17 ploughs. One of the churches must be on the site of the present St Martin's (the other is almost certainly the parish church of Ewell). This rather thin evidence, when looked at as a whole, could be taken to imply a dispersed pattern of pre-conquest settlement. Certainly, the overall pattern of settlement development in Surrey may suggest that it is unlikely that anything resembling a nucleated settlement emerged until after the conquest (Poulton 1998, esp 242).

Medieval

Epsom remained a possession of Chertsey Abbey until the dissolution of the monasteries in 1538, and thereafter it passed through various hands, with its importance steadily diminishing. Several subordinate manors or holdings also existed in Epsom (for details see *VCH* 3, 271-8).

Neither documentary sources nor archaeological evidence offer any certain basis on which to base an account of the development of medieval Epsom. At present, it can only be suggested, from comparative evidence (Poulton 1998, 242; Blair 1991, 161), that nucleated settlement at Epsom village is likely to have replaced an earlier dispersed pattern in or around the 12th century. This probability is made the greater by it being a possession of Chertsey Abbey, which seems to have engaged in a campaign of improvement, involving the creation of regular two-row village plans, on its manors (Blair 1991, 58). Blair, in fact, suggests that the present plan of Epsom shows traces of such arrangement, and Poulton (1997) has agreed, pointing to the evidence of Rocque's map (fig 2) for such an arrangement either side of Church St, to the north of the church. An alternative view has been advanced by White & Harte (1992, Introduction, 1st page (not numbered)). They presume an early village around the church but go on to suggest

"When the village prospered, the nave of the church was rebuilt in Early English style, and in the 1280s the rector - Roger of the Grove - renovated the chancel in a matching style. At the same time, the abbey's planners attempted to make Epsom into a formal settlement. Along the road from London to Leatherhead (now the western High Street) surveyors laid out a double row of building plots called Ebbisham Street, backing onto meadow land and fronting a large-egg-shaped pond dug partly for the benefit of cattle and partly to drain some water from the new houses."

Certainly the western end of Epsom High St was known as "The town of Ebbisham" in the 17th century and later (Lehmann 1987, 2), but there seems to be no specific evidence for its origins.

Post-medieval

The well producing the purgative waters responsible for Epsom's development as a spa was discovered on Epsom Common in the 1620s. Its reputation grew rapidly and by the middle of the 17th century it had become very widely known. It would seem that its early development was rather haphazard, with little specific provision for visitors, apart from alehouses and boarding houses, mostly seemingly converted from existing properties.

The late 17th century saw a period of more purposeful development, as the town moved from being visited essentially for medicinal purposes to being a fashionable resort. In 1685 a charter for a market was obtained. The western High Street was developed or redeveloped, and the eastern High St and Church St saw many new dwellings, especially between 1680 and 1720. At the same time new facilities were provided, including the 'new wells' in the town, new and more sophisticated inns, bowling greens and an assembly room (see especially Clark 1960).

In the early to mid 18th century the town lost popularity as a spa, being overtaken by Bath, and the great building boom ended. Nevertheless, its many fine houses and proximity to

London ensured that it continued to attract the gentry, and with them the need for 'apothecaries and coffee men, wig-makers, watch-menders and other trades unlikely to be found in a rural setting' (White & Harte, 1992, Introduction, 4th page (not numbered)). Between 1680 and 1800 Epsom grew from 100 to 400 houses, 10% of the latter being the residence of a gentleman (White & Harte, 1992, Introduction).

The continuing prosperity of the town was ensured by the rapid development of racing on Epsom Downs in the late 18th and earlier 19th century. The Derby was founded in 1780 and rapidly became the most important event in the English racing calendar, at a time when horse racing was becoming not only a major interest of the aristocracy, but one which attracted large crowds of every social class. Although the races themselves were only of a few days duration, the training stables and associated activities ensured a year round contribution to the economic fortunes of Epsom.

Epsom acquired a railway station in 1847, and a further station was provided for the racecourse in 1865. At first this seemed likely to enhance its existing prosperity and distinctive social character, but in fact it was eventually make it much more similar to other Surrey towns than before. On the one hand the gentry were to find that with London and its resources only a short train journey away they had far less need of specialised local shops and trades, and these gradually disappeared. On the other hand, as with Ewell and other similarly placed towns, it became a population centre for workers commuting to London. In 1869, the common fields were enclosed, and development began south and east of the town in Burch Heath, Worple and College Roads.

Proximity to London was also the key factor in the late 19th and early 20th century development of huge mental and similar hospitals around Epsom. They included Horton Manor in 1899, the Manor hospital, Horton hospital, and St Ebba's in 1901, Long Grove in 1907, and finally West Park in 1924. These hospitals have recently been closed and are being replaced by residential development, continuing the 20th century growth of the built-up area.

THE ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE TOWN PLAN

Topographic divisions

The detailed analysis of the topographic development of Epsom is presented in the sections of the report following this one. The analysis has enabled the definition of a number of distinct elements within the plan, which are shown on fig 6, and summarised below. Cross-reference to them is given as T1 etc in the text that follows. The areas outlined are based, as far as possible, on the indications given by the Tithe map, with additional reference to Rocque's map (fig 2) and the information contained in Lehmann (1987) where relevant. It should be stressed that the precise extent of a number of these elements is not known.

1 The present area of the church, graveyard and rectory (?) is presumed to broadly reflect the area established in the late-Saxon period.

2 Area of primary Saxo-Norman settlement around the church. The area indicated is purely notional as there is no direct evidence for this.

3 Possible area of medieval nucleated village. The eastern side is marked by a reasonably regular eastern boundary line, still evident on the modern map. The area seems to be shown as more regularly built-up on the Rocque map than the Tithe map. Area 4 is probably a stronger contender for the site of the medieval village and this area is more probably a key area of expansion in the 17th and 18th centuries.

4 This area is called 'villagium de Ebbisham' in 17th century documents and is probably the site of a nucleated village established c1200. The Tithe map shows a very regular set of long narrow plots extending northwards from the wide High St, with its village pond centrally placed. The south side is less regular, perhaps because this was a key area of development in the 17th century and later spa (see 6 and 7).

5 Area of expansion in 17th/18th century. The plots on the north side of the eastern High St appear to have some regularity on the Tithe map, suggesting planned or staged expansion. The frontage and buildings shown on the Tithe map now lie beneath the widened High St.

6 Other areas of expansion in the 17th/18th century. These are plotted from the Tithe map, but comparison with Rocque's map indicates that they are generally likely to have existed by c1750. In some cases it is clear from the Tithe map that development is taking place within strips of the medieval open fields.

7 The 'New Inn' (now Waterloo House) complex. This was in existence by the early 17th century and included not only the Inn, but shops, an assembly room and a bowling green.

8 John Livingstone's development, comprising the 'New Wells' (8a) and the Grove (8b: see fig 4).

9 Approximate area of the Clayhill bowling green.

Medieval and earlier

It must immediately be stated that it is difficult to discern any specifically pre-medieval influence which helped influence the development of Epsom's town plan, beyond the broad constraints of its general location near to a spring and a stream. The precise antiquity of routeways is, of course, often very difficult to establish. In the present case an east-west and a north-south routeway seem to be of key importance, with the Roman Stane Street, passing just to the south and east of the church not, seemingly having any influence on the origins and development of the medieval settlement.

The north-south route, following the line of Church Street and crossing the High Street to become Hook Road seems likely to have followed that general course since at least the Saxon period, when the church was established beside it. The east-west route is more problematic. This route, known as the Portway in the medieval period, is the link between the series of villages along the dip slope of the North Downs. It seems reasonably clear from early records (Nail 1965, 50-1; Meekings & Shearman 1968, CXXX) that its route originally passed close to the Parish Church. East of the church this would be rather on the alignment of the northerly of the two routes from Ewell towards Epsom church shown on the Senex map of 1729. West of the church the medieval route is less certain. By 1707 (Clark 1960), esp fig 1; fig 4) the route ran along the present Church Street and thence along the present High Street before turning sharply southwards again. This seems rather an odd course, even for the most Bellockian of roads, and surely requires a particular explanation. That explanation might lie in White and Harte's (1982, Introduction) suggestion that the 'villagium de Ebbisham' of the 17th century and later Court Rolls represents a planned medieval village either side of the wide western High Street, with its pond in the middle (T4). The Tithe map of 1842 (fig 3) reveals the houses fronting onto the north side as having reasonably regular plots, rather like those of known medieval villages. This is not apparent on the south side, but that area was comprehensively redeveloped in the great years of Epsom spa (next section). By the time of Rocque's map (fig 2; published 1768, but surveyed some years earlier) a route via the Upper High Street to Ewell was in existence. It is uncertain when this developed, but Salmon's map of Surrey of 1670 indicates a developed area only along the High Street, and the road from Ewell leading directly into it, with the church shown separately and isolated. The map is rather diagrammatic, but, at the least, is a strong suggestion that this route to Ewell developed during the early years of the spa or before.

In the absence of any specifically medieval evidence (historical, structural or archaeological), it is not possible to take this argument any further. It does, though, seem

enough to make it the preferred hypothesis to that (Poulton 1997) which suggests that a nucleated settlement was established along Church Street in the medieval period (T3). Certainly, given the early importance of the church, some settlement around it may be expected, but its extent is unknown (T2).

The development of the Spa

The discovery and popularisation of the waters at Epsom and their purgative qualities in the years after about 1620 began a new phase in the development of the town. Unfortunately our sources, especially in a topographic sense, for the earliest phase are very weak. White & Hart (1992) suggest that Epsom had 60 houses in 1496 and 100 in 1680. New houses would certainly have been necessary to cope with the large numbers of visitors who came, often staying for weeks at a time. No doubt, also, existing houses were converted and/or extended for accommodation and alehouses, which seem to have been the only public places before the late 17th century (Clark 1960). Where the new houses were built remains unclear. Assuming that the medieval village was, indeed, around the western High Street, the area between that and the church is most probable. Certainly the narrowness of the eastern High Street suggests a different origin for settlement around it.

Between about 1670 and 1720 Epsom underwent a radical change. Facilities were developed to enhance its attractions as a social centre. A bowling green was in existence by 1671, and in the following years the New Inn (now Waterloo House) was developed with a row of shops and an Assembly Room to the rear, overlooking the bowling green (T7; fig 4). New development was particularly evident in the area west of South Street. Here the 'New Wells' (T8a) were developed, effectively in the town as opposed to out on the common, like the Old Wells. A number of new buildings, shops, and a bowling green were also created in the same area, as well as The Grove (T8b), the whole open to the public. Further west still, another bowling green was also established (T9). By the end of this period the built-up area of Epsom must have been fairly similar to that indicated by Rocque's map (fig 2), although the roads shown on that include a number which Clarke (1960, fig 1) did not regard as in existence by 1707, suggesting continued development through the first half of the 18th century.

These roads can generally be correlated with the roads and paths indicated on the Tithe map of 1842 (fig 3). Their apparently greater status in a number of cases on Rocque's map is likely to be because of his lack of a cartographic convention for distinguishing routes of differing importance. The Parade appears not to have linked to Church Street in 1768, although it did so by 1842. In contrast to the lack of expansion in these years, there was quite a lot of internal change. The number of houses increased from 400 to 600 between 1800 and c1850, with accommodation becoming increasingly crowded. The great days of the spa, over by about 1730, left behind them much housing built for the gentry, and its distinctive social mix remained a characteristic feature of the town. Its attractions were enhanced with the development of the popularity and importance of the Derby and Epsom Races in the late 18th and early 19th century. The town continued to have shops and traders (including, for example, wigmakers and watch menders) servicing the needs of the gentry, but the bowling greens and assembly rooms associated with the public life of the spa went out of use.

The arrival of the railway, as in most Surrey towns, provided the means which allowed the population to expand considerably, serving the needs of London. Between the High Street and Church Street new roads have been developed, allowing this area, largely open in 1842 (fig 3) to be filled in. Further south, the Rosebery Gardens prevented development, but on all other sides the town has spread amorously outwards.

ASSESSMENT

Epsom has produced a comparatively small amount of archaeological information, and it is not until its development as a spa in the 17th century that a reasonable body of historical information emerges. Its medieval development owed much to its location on the spring line,

but the rather different phenomenon of the wells, with their purgative qualities, underlay its success as a spa.

The development of settlement prior to the 17th century lacks clear evidence. It is probable that some settlement developed around the church in the Saxon and Norman periods, and it seems highly likely that Chertsey Abbey established a nucleated village on this estate as they did on a number of others. There is a strong probability, but as yet no proof, that this was the 'villagium de Ebbisham' referred to in the 17th century where indications of regular planning can be seen on early maps.

Around 1620 the Epsom Wells were discovered and rapidly became famous. Until the later 17th century visitors came essentially for health reasons, but from then down until about 1730 there was a rapid development of the spa as a fashionable social centre. The settlement expanded considerably along the main routeways. It is not at present possible to distinguish areas of earlier from later development, although it should become practical with more detailed mapping of the data in Lehmann 1987. Epsom became a town which was very distinct in character from other Surrey towns, with its high proportion of gentry, social amenities, and specialist shops and traders. The social history of these developments has been well studied, but there is, as yet, very little archaeological information to augment this, and neither the documentary nor the architectural evidence has been fully exploited for its bearing on the topography and development of the town.

Maps show the extent of the town clearly from the mid-18th century onwards and it is apparent that down to the mid-late 19th century its extent changed very little. The coming of the railway enabled workers to commute to London. As a result, the population grew rapidly and new housing was built all around the town centre. It was not until after the second world war, however, that substantial rebuilding in the town centre took place, and even now many late 17th and 18th century buildings survive.

EXISTING PROTECTION (FIG 7)

- 1 There are no Scheduled Ancient Monuments in the area, but much of it is defined as an area of high archaeological potential (AHAP)
- 2 A substantial proportion of the area of greatest archaeological interest falls within the Ewell Conservation Area
- 3 There are many listed buildings within the study area

ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL POTENTIAL

General comment

A large part of the area of greatest archaeological interest has undergone piecemeal redevelopment in the last century. Little archaeological evidence has been obtained during that process. It would be unwise to assume that all archaeological evidence has been destroyed in such areas, except where deep excavation for basements, foundations or such-like has taken place.

A substantial proportion of the area of greatest archaeological interest falls within the Epsom Conservation Area, within which large-scale redevelopment is relatively unlikely. Opportunities for small-scale work should, however, be grasped wherever possible, since this may still clarify issues and provide further detail, especially with regard to the medieval development of the settlement. It will be of some importance that adequate arrangements are made for the publication of any such work. Even a recent report (Sabel 2000) is quite inadequate in its presentation of primary data.

There has been some very useful investigation and publication of research into the comparatively rich historical sources for the later 17th century onwards, including some analysis of their topographic value (Lehmann 1987). The method of presentation enables a very clear understanding of the development of individual or linked groups of plots, but unfortunately makes it difficult to gain any overall sense of change and development in the town. It should be possible to rework the data to provide maps showing the town in 1680 and

1755. It would also be of considerable value to relate this information to the evidence of standing buildings.

It remains, then, for various reasons, difficult to formulate detailed research questions which future investigations might hope to answer. The issues indicated in the following section are, therefore, largely addressing broad themes of urban development:

Specific issues

- Can the location of later Saxon settlement be defined? In particular what settlement was there around the church, and was there settlement near Waterloo House?
- When did the medieval nucleated settlement develop? Was it around the western High St, or along Church St?
- What was the balance of planned and organic medieval development?
- Did the house plots in such a village have backlands, like those in towns?
- If so, what was the intensity and character (industrial or otherwise) of such use?
- More generally, in what ways does the archaeological evidence for a village such as this differ from that for the towns?
- When did the expansion of the town start following the discovery of the spa waters?
- Can the area and extent of its early development (up to about 1670) be defined?
- What were the areas of new development and redevelopment in the great years of the spa (c 1670 to 1730)?
- Can archaeological evidence for the trades and services of 17th and 18th century Epsom be discovered?
- If so, how does it compare with that from centres serving a clientele of similar status, such as London or Bath?

APPENDIX: SMR AND SITES LISTING

- 1115 TQ 2139 6052
The parish church of St Martin's in Church Street has a tower of 15th century date and was rebuilt and enlarged in 1824 and 1907.
- 1119 TQ 2140 6053
A dene hole was discovered in 1907 when St Martin's Church was being enlarged. It was c5m deep and chambers ran each way from the bottom for c3.6m. Artefacts recovered include charcoal and a few sherds of hand-made pottery.
- 1121 TQ 20000 60000
A Dobunnic uninscribed gold stater (Iron Age coin), triple-tailed horse-type with patterned obverse, was found in Epsom in c1910.
- 1151 TQ 20000 60000
An Iron Age stater of Tasciovanus was found in Epsom in c1923.
- 3690 TQ 2058 6059
A short excavation conducted in 1980 by S.Nelson at 41 South Street, Epsom revealed the foundations of a timber framed building. It was built gable end to the street with a central chimney stack. Material from the construction deposits indicated a 17th century date. There was evidence of some later rebuilding.
- 3726 2140 6050 (linear)
Stane Street, the London to Chichester Roman Road, is the most westerly of the southern radial roads from London and is best known because so much of it still remains in use. The supposed line through Epsom passes just to the east of St Martin's Church in Church Street. It was the most important of the series as it connected Londinium with Regnum, the tribal capital of Sussex.
- 4204 TQ 2050 6065
During the refurbishment of No 6 South Street, Epsom (a late Stuart structure of c1680/90), several pottery sherds forming a vessel of North Holland slipware were recovered from what appeared to be a small pit. The vessel was decorated on the interior by a cockerel design and the date '1712'.
- A TQ 2102 6083
An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by SCAU in 1996 at No 2 Church Street, Epsom on the site of the proposed Litten Tree public house. Four features were observed: two brick and chalk wall footings of post-medieval date, a brick relieving arch of apparent 19th century date, and an area of crushed chalk of unknown date or function. One of the walls may relate to a building recorded on the 1842 Tithe Map (Robertson 1996, 9-10).
- B TQ 2095 6075
An archaeological evaluation and watching brief were undertaken by SCAU in 1997 at Epsom Town Hall on land affected by the proposed new car park access road. The remains of Cromwell House, a demolished 18th century building, were revealed adjacent to Church Street. A few associated features of post-medieval date were also revealed as well as a ditch of probable 18th century date. Finds recovered include pottery of 17th-19th century date, ironwork, building materials, fragments of clay pipe and bottle glass, and two residual sherds of late medieval pottery. Several pieces of struck flint of late prehistoric date were also recovered including a knife, a possible awl and a utilised blade butt (Robertson 1997). The subsequent watching brief in 1999 revealed further evidence for the early foundations of Cromwell House and finds of 17th-19th century date. The base of an early-mid 16th century vessel and several late medieval red ware sherds were also recovered. The only other feature observed was a possible post-hole containing a late medieval sherd (Stevenson 1999).
- C TQ 2114 6087
An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by SCAU at 14-18 Upper High Street, Epsom in 1999. No features or finds of archaeological interest were observed, probably due to the large amount of ground disturbance associated with earlier phases of development (Pattison 1999a, 1).
- D TQ 2080 6082
An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by SCAU on the Epsom Central Area Development in Epsom High Street. No features or finds of archaeological interest were observed as the site had been disturbed to a depth of 1.4m or more in the 19th and 20th centuries (Pattison 1999b, 1).
- E TQ 2063 6070

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken on trial pits at Waterloo House, Epsom by Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd. in 2000. Various layers of archaeological interest were revealed. These included Saxon/early medieval layers dating to 900-1050, several layers of uncertain date predating the construction of Waterloo House in c1692, evidence of late 17th century occupation from 1660-1692, construction layers of Waterloo House and its late 17th to mid-18th century use as a spa facility, and evidence for its conversion to tenements from 1755 and its later occupation (Sabel 2000).

Other SMR locations within Epsom but outside the Extensive Urban Survey study area:

- 1105 TQ 215 612
Three late 1st century Roman cinerary urns were found, in 1923, in the brickfield of Messrs. Stone & Co. Ltd., near the Ewell boundary, at the 'Half Mile Bush', on the Epsom-Ewell road. The burials in fragmentary condition and in line at c7.3m intervals and 1-1.5m deep. Two had contained other urns, the third a glass vessel. Calcined bones were found in each case and a few brass coins, two of which were of Claudius and Trajan.
- 1107 TQ 2163 6077
About six Saxon burials (probably of 6th or 10th-11th century date) were found in allotments at Epsom in 1929. The burials lay in a line parallel with Stane Street and no associated objects were found.
- 1113 TQ 2170 6165
The site of a probable gallows at "Dead Hills": a possible barrow site.
- 1118 TQ 2179 6062
Several extended burials of Late Roman or Saxon date were found in 1934. They were discovered during the construction of houses in Copse Edge Avenue. No associated objects are known to have been found.

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FIGURES

- 1 Extensive Urban Survey of Surrey. **Top:** Epsom, showing the area of the parish and manor. The principal routeways, as shown on 18th century maps, are also shown. **Bottom:** parishes (about 1823) and drift geology.
 - 2 The Rocque map of about 1768, showing the town, much enlarged from the original
 - 3 Epsom as shown on the Tithe map of 1842 (scale about 1:3000)
 - 4 Epsom in 1707, showing (top) the whole town in relation to Epsom in 1956, and (bottom) a detail of the New Wells (from Clark 1960, figs 1 and 2)
- Fig 5 Sites and Monuments Records and other archaeological information for Epsom
- Fig 6 Epsom: street system and possible stages in the topographic development of settlement (scale 1:3000).
- Fig 7 Epsom: constraints map (AHAP, Conservation Area, Listed buildings)