

**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION OF LAND
AT ST MARY'S SCHOOL, BARNWOOD ROAD, SURREY (SU 970 510)**

1. Introduction

Between 2nd and 4th April 1997, staff of the Surrey County Archaeological Unit (SCAU) carried out an archaeological evaluation of land at St Mary's RC Primary School, Barnwood Road, Guildford, Surrey (fig 1). The work was undertaken to support a planning application (ref 96/P1308) to redevelop the site for residential purposes. The evaluation was recommended in view of the location of the school in close proximity to the Worplesdon Roman Villa.

SCAU were commissioned to undertake the work by Tomei & Mackley, architects to the Diocese of Arundel & Brighton.

2. Methodology

A total of five trial trenches were excavated across the proposed development site using a JCB excavator with a 150cm wide toothless grading bucket (fig 2). The trenches were *c*1.5m wide and between 6m and 22.5m in length. The machining was carefully watched for the occurrence of any features or artefacts of archaeological interest which might indicate the presence of ancient activity on site.

3. Results

The stratigraphy revealed during the trial trenching varied across the site. Trench 1 revealed a stratigraphy of 15cm of grass and topsoil over 15cm of mid grey-brown loamy clay subsoil over the natural orangey-brown clay at the southern end. The trench became progressively deeper towards the northern end, where the stratigraphy was *c*15cm grass and topsoil, over *c*50cm dark grey-brown loamy subsoil, overlying *c*25cm of dark grey-brown loamy clay (context 102) containing numerous fragments of burnt flint overlying the natural orangey-brown clay (fig 3). There were a few pockets of yellow redeposited clay (context 104) within the subsoil layer overlying layer 102. Midway along the trench, for a length of *c*330cm, layer 102 was seen to overlie an *c*8cm thick layer of mid-brown/orange loamy clay (context 103) containing occasional fragments of burnt flint which overlay the natural clay.

The eastern half of layer 102 was sampled by hand along its length, but no features were revealed cutting the natural clay beneath. A variety of finds were

recovered from layer 102 including seven pieces of struck flint: 1 struck flint flake, two snapped blades, one possible microlith (of possible mesolithic date) and three possible cores/smashed pebbles. Other finds recovered include numerous fragments of burnt flint (*c*20-40mm in diameter), nineteen fragments of tile of medieval or post-medieval date (two of which were burnt), four fragments of daub or tile, a brick fragment, a fragment of handmade window glass and half a brick of probable 17th century date. One other struck flint flake was recovered from the topsoil removed from trench 1 (context 105)

Trench 2 was excavated within the wooded area of the site. The stratigraphy revealed was *c*10cm of leaf litter overlying *c*20cm of brown loamy soil containing large blocks of concrete, bricks and modern debris, overlying a *c*20cm mixed layer of tarmac and modern debris over 35cm of mid-brown loamy clay over the natural orangey-brown clay. No features of archaeological interest were revealed within this trench and the only stray find recovered was a fragment of burnt flint.

Trench 3 revealed a stratigraphy of 10cm leaf litter overlying 40cm of dark grey loamy clay subsoil, over a *c*30cm of cokey debris over 40cm of mid grey-brown loamy clay over the natural orange clay. Drainpipes were revealed crossing the north-western half of the trench. No features or finds of archaeological interest were revealed within this trench

Trench 4 was fairly deep and revealed a stratigraphy of 25cm grass and topsoil over *c*25cm orangey-brown loamy clay, over *c*40cm of cokey material over *c*50cm moist dark grey-brown loamy clay, containing occasional fragments of modern brick and debris, overlying the natural orange-brown clay. No features or finds of archaeological interest were revealed within this trench.

Trench 5 was also relatively deep and revealed a stratigraphy of 15cm grass and topsoil over a 15cm layer of soil and shingle, over *c*50cm of orangey-brown clay overlying a 10cm layer of leaf litter and bark containing fragments of modern glass. This overlay a *c*20cm layer of dark grey-brown loamy clay (context 100), containing fragments of burnt flint, tile and charcoal, which appears to be very similar to layer 102 within trench 1 (which lies 11m away to the east). Layer 100 overlay 30cm of mid-brown loamy clay (context 101) which also contained occasional fragments of burnt flint and appears to be very similar to layer 103 identified in trench 1. This overlay the natural orange-brown clay. No features were revealed within this trench.

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

The trial trenching in the proposed development area did not reveal any features of archaeological interest. However, a layer containing a variety of artefacts was identified within trenches 1 and 5 in the northern part of the site. The finds include pieces of struck and burnt flint which are indicative of activity of prehistoric date at the site, tile of medieval or post-medieval date, brick of 17th century date and a few undateable finds including a piece of handmade glass. No finds of Roman date were recovered from the site. The variety of finds recovered from layer 102, and the nature of the layer itself, makes it difficult to pinpoint the origin of the material.

The varying stratigraphy across the site points towards levelling and landscaping of the site, probably during the construction of the school. It is not possible to know without trenching how other open areas such as the large playground and the area around the front entrance of the school may have been affected by this and whether or not any possible existing archaeology may have been damaged or buried deeper. Due to the presence of the artefacts recovered from trenches 1 and 2 it would be desirable to test these two areas prior to the redevelopment of the site in order to reach a more complete conclusion regarding the potential of the site. The area of woodland tested by trenches 2 and 3 does not appear to contain any remains of archaeological interest, however, there is an area of woodland to the north of trenches 1 and 5 which may contain deposits of archaeological interest, although it is about one metre lower than the existing ground level around trenches 1 and 5.

With a view to the above it is recommended that the area of the tarmac playground, the area around the entrance of the school and the area of woodland in the northern corner of the site (if it is to be cleared) are tested by trial trenching prior to the redevelopment of the site.

The evidence does not suggest that those areas already tested by trial trenching require more detailed work prior to any redevelopment, but it is recommended that the minor interest indicated should be taken account of by an archaeological watching brief during work.

Fig 1 Location map of the proposed development site at St Mary's RC Primary School, Barnwood Road, Guildford (at scale 1:10,000)

Fig 2 Location plan of the trial trenches at St Mary's RC Primary School, Barnwood Road, Guildford

Fig 3 Section drawing and plan of trial trench 1 at St Mary's RC Primary School, Barnwood Road, Guildford

TT	LENGTH	DEPTH	FINDS/F
1	22.5m	Depth 60cm - 16cm grass and topsoil over - 20cm darky grey brown loamy clay with burnt flint (102) over - 10cm mid brown orangey loamy clay with burnt flint (103) over - natural orangey brown clay	Lot of burnt flint, occas.tile fragment,

The trench became deeper towards the north-west end. At east end it is 30cm of grass and topsoil over the natural clay

N.B. Lots of burnt flint, occasional fragments of tile, no features obvious, only this dark layer (see section drawing)

2	10m	85cm deep 10cm leaf litter 20cm loamy mid brown subsoil containing modern debris (concrete bricks etc)	1 stray find of burnt flint
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N.B. Modern debris to quite a depth in the woods includes large blocks of concrete and a layer of tarmac at c50cm depth. 1 stray find of a piece of burnt flint recovered.

3	8m	120cm deep 10cm leafy layer over 40cm dark grey soily clay over 30cm of cokey debris/rubbish over 40cm of mid-grey brown clay loam subsoil over natural orange loamy clay	
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Drainage pipes revealed at the western end of the trench coming from the manhole cover.

4	8.2m (10M)	max depth = 135cm - 25cm grass and topsoil over - 25cm loamy clay over - 40cm cokey material over - 50cm moist dark grey brown loamy clay containing some brick fragments over - natural orange-brown clay	
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N.B. Quite a depth of made ground/disturbed ground. Possibly resulting from levelling/landscaping during the construction of St Mary's School. Giles said the caretaker told him that a layer of clay had been laid around the school??

- 5 5.5m max depth 140cm
- 15cm grass and topsoil over
 - 15cm soil and shingle layer over
 - 50cm of orange brown clay capping over
 - a 10cm layer of organic material (leaf litter & bark
poss modern layer in woods prior to school
construction) containing modern glass fragments over
 - 20cm dark grey-brown loamy clay (layer 100, same as
layer 102 in TT1) containing burnt flint, charcoal
flecks, baked clay/tile fragments? over
 - 30cm of mid brown loamy clay containing
occasional fragments of burnt flint (layer 101) over
 - natural orange clay

FINDS RECOVERED:

Context:	Finds:
100	Tile fragments No = Occasional fragments of burnt flint (as in 102 = similar layer)
102	1 Struck flint flake 2 snapped blades 1 possible microlith - struck and worked flint with some retouch (SHOW NICK) 1 piece of old handmade glass (not modern) Fragments of roof tile of medieval or post-medieval date (<u>Not</u> Roman) No. = A possible brick fragment of 18th or 19th century date 2 fragments of burnt tile No.= fragments of burnt tile or daub No.= A possible 17th century brick (worn and old, has been knocking around for a bit)
102	Numerous fragments of burnt flint observed/recovered/not retained from layer
103	Occasional fragments of burnt flint (not retained)
105	Struck flint - probably nothing (show Nick)

Trial Trench 1 at Scale 1:100