

JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATHING BRIEF

AT

SHELLEYS, HIGH STREET, COOKHAM

BERKSHIRE

NGR SU 89536 85356

On behalf of

Nigel Weller & Pippa Strasser-Ganderton

AUGUST 2014

REPORT FOR Nigel Weller & Pippa Strasser-Ganderton
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Summary

John Moore Heritage Services carried out an archaeological watching brief during the excavation of a foundation trench for a new extension at Shelleys, High Street, Cookham, Berkshire (NGR SU 89536 85356). A late post-medieval boundary wall, well and rubbish pit were recorded during the watching brief. The rubbish pit 109 contained pottery sherds, ceramic building material, glass and a fragment of a Minton Pugin glazed encaustic tile. All material recovered from the pit was late 19th century in date. No other features or finds of archaeological significance, in particular Saxon or medieval were present.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Location (Figure 1)

The site is located towards the west end, on the north side of High Street, Cookham (NGR SU 89536 85356). The site lies at approximately 26m above Ordnance Datum and is currently in domestic use. The underlying geology is Shepperton Gravel (BGS 255).

1.2 Planning Background

The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead granted planning permission (14/00877/FULL) for the erection of a two-storey extension to the rear of property. Due to the site potential to contain archaeological remains a condition was attached to the permission for a programme of archaeological work to be carried out. Berkshire Archaeology had indicated that this should be a continuous watching brief during the course of groundworks.

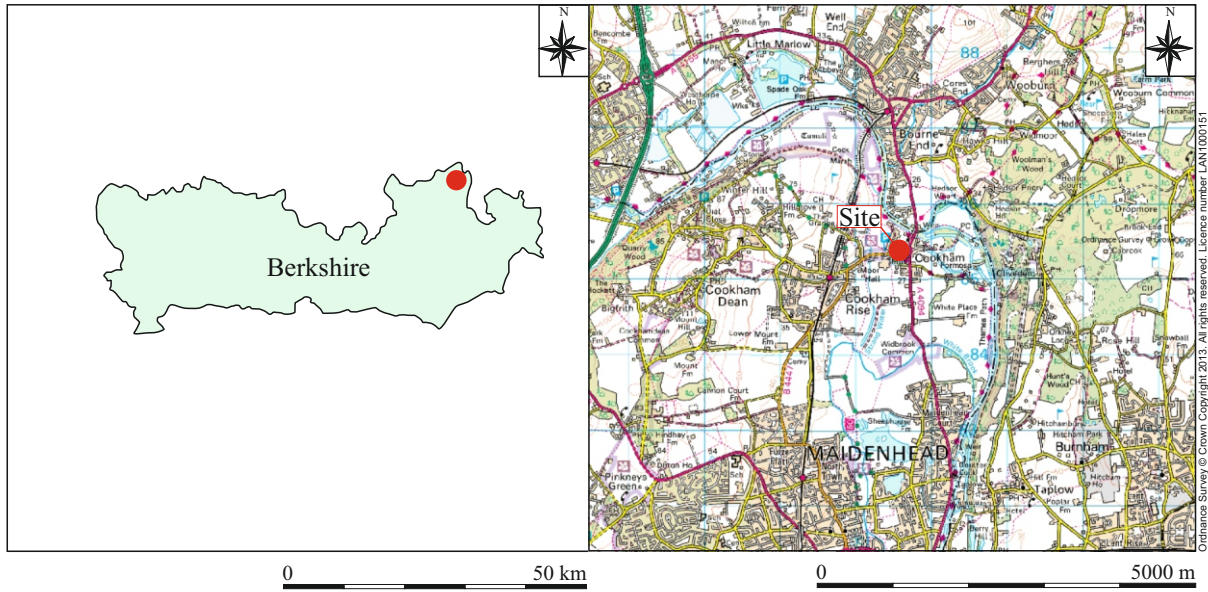
1.3 Archaeological Background

The brief archaeological background to the site was outlined in the Planning Consultation Response (Smith 2014).

The site lies within the historic core of the settlement of Cookham. The settlement is thought to have Middle Saxon (7th and 8th century AD) origins and to have had a Minster church by the 8th century AD. Cookham had borough status until the settlement was eclipsed by Maidenhead following the building of the bridge across the River Thames. The Saxon and medieval settlement of Cookham is of considerable local and regional importance. Shelleys lies on the main street within the historic settlement, with the site of the proposed extension lying to the rear. The site of the proposed extension therefore was thought to lie within an area of medieval and post-medieval back yard activities to the rear of the High Street frontage.

2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION

The aims of the investigation were as follows:



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Key ■ Monitored area □ Existing building

Figure 1: Site location

- To make a record of any significant remains revealed during the course of any operations that may disturb or destroy archaeological remains.

In particular:

- To record any evidence associated with the Saxon settlement, and the medieval and post-medieval village.

3 STRATEGY

3.1 Research Design

Site procedures for the investigation and recording of potential archaeological deposits and features were in line with the standards specified by the Institute for Archaeologists (2008) and the principles of MoRPHE (English Heritage 2006), and agreed with archaeology officer Mr Roland Smith from Berkshire Archaeology.

3.2 Methodology

An archaeologist was present on site during the course of groundworks associated with the development of extension to the existing house. All ground reduction was achieved by hand excavation. Ground reduction over the footprint had already been carried out before an archaeologist was called in.

Standard techniques were employed throughout, involving the completion of a written record for each deposit encountered, with scale plans and section drawings compiled where appropriate and possible.

All artefacts recovered from archaeological features and deposits were collected, apart of ceramic building material where only sample was taken, for identification and were not retained.

4 RESULTS

All features were assigned with individual context number. Context numbers with no brackets indicate feature cuts, numbers in the round brackets show feature fills or deposits of material and numbers in bold indicate any form of masonry.

4.1 Field Results (Figure 2)

Prior the excavation of foundation trench for new two-storey extension, the old extension was demolished and concrete slab was removed. Only fragments of concrete foundations from old extension was left *in situ* (Fig. 2a), which cut in to the deposit (103). The entire area of the footprint of new-build was reduced on average by 0.50m (Pl.1).



Plate 1: Monitored area, looking south

The excavated footing trench for new extension was 8.65m long in total, 0.60m wide and reached maximum depth 0.90m from the present ground surface.

The lowest deposit recorded within foundation trench was natural light yellowish brown silty sand (106), 0.80m below present ground level (Fig. 2a, b, c).

Overlying the deposit (106) was 0.45m thick deposit of dark grey sandy silt (103), with occasional small flints (Fig. 2a, b, c; Pl.1). Animal bones and fragments of roof tiles were recovered from the upper part of this deposit. Deposit (103) covered the entire monitored area and represents subsoil.

Cut into the top of deposit (103) were foundations of the former boundary wall located at west edge of monitored area. The wall foundations were set within construction cut 108 aligned north to south. It was 0.33m deep, 3.90m long and 0.20m wide as excavated (Fig. 2a, b, c; Pl.1). At the base of construction cut 108 was a layer of compacted lime (107), 0.06m thick and 1.7m long (Fig. 2b). Overlying deposit (107) was wall foundation **102** mainly built of flints of maximum dimensions 150×110×90mm and occasional sub-angular sandstone of similar size, bonded with light yellowish sandy lime mortar. On the top of wall foundation **102** was a layer of 0.04m thick concrete, which was part of neighbour's pavement.

Also cut through subsoil (103) into the natural (106) was a large rubbish pit 109, located in the northwest part of monitored area (Fig. 2a, c; Pl.2). It was possible sub-oval in plan, 1.48m wide (in section), 0.44m deep (as excavated) with steep concave sides. The fill of the pit (110) was dark grey sandy silt contains a large quantity of pottery sherds, ceramic building material, animal bone, glass bottles, metal objects

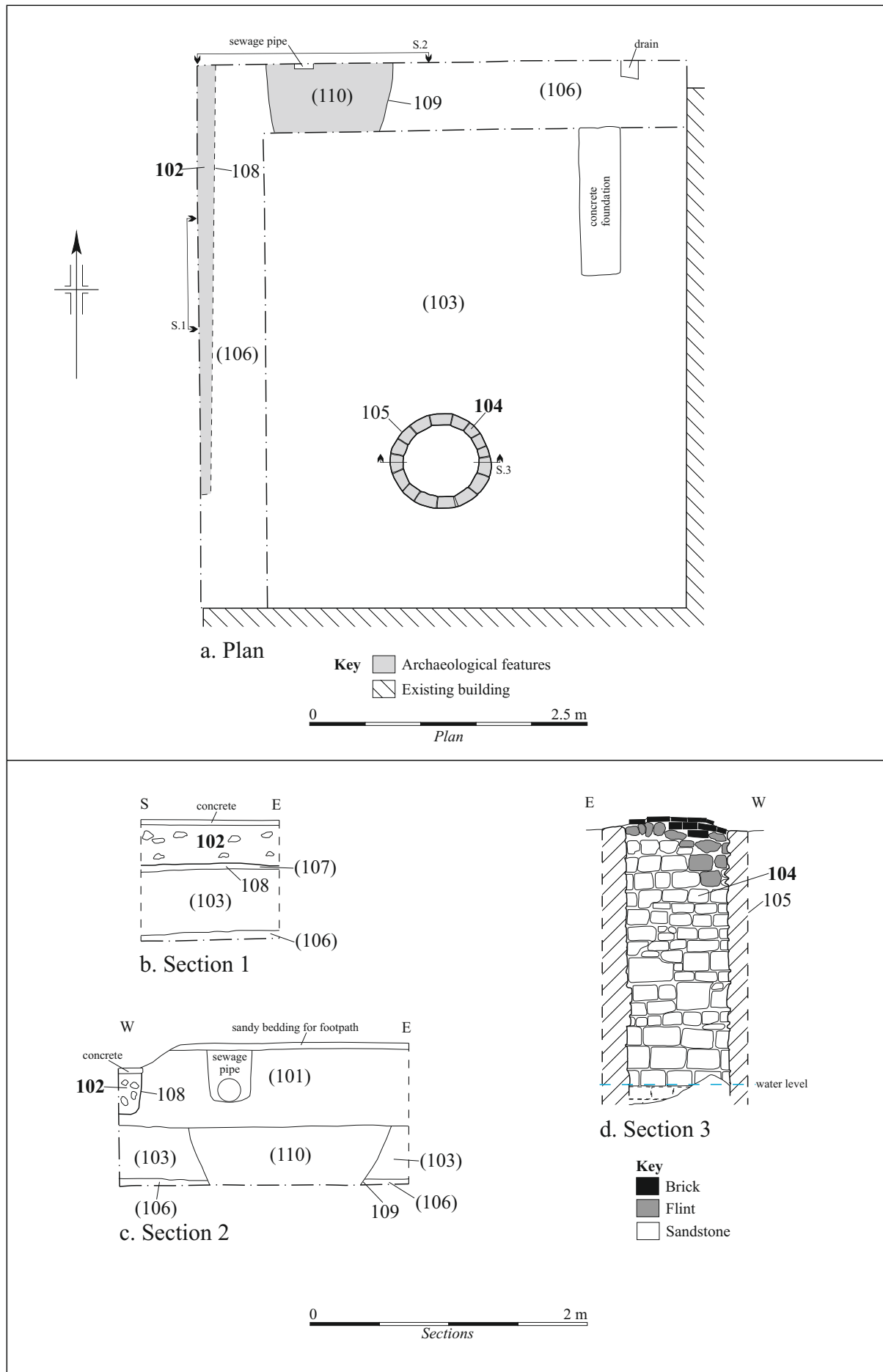


Figure 2: Plan and sections of monitored area

and coal, late 19th or early 20th century in date (see Section 5). Overlaying the pit 109 was a 0.50m thick deposit of very dark grey sandy loam (101), which represents topsoil/garden soil. Deposit (101) was disturbed by a modern sewage pipe and drainpipe. The final layer in the north section of the foundation trench was a 0.05m thick layer of light yellowish brown sand, bedding for concrete slabs for the pavement.



Plate 2: Pit 109, looking north

After removal of concrete slab of the old extension, ground workers uncovered a well-preserved well **104**, located in the centre of south part of monitored area (Fig. 2a; Pl. 1). The well was set within circular construction cut 105, which measured 1m in diameter. The internal diameter of well **104** was 0.72m and the thickness of the wall was 0.14m on average as seen on the surface (Fig. 2a, d; Pl. 3). The well was 2.08m deep from the top of preserved masonry down to the silt on the bottom and the water level was at 1.94m. The main structure of well **104** was of roughly squared sandstone built in courses. The upper five courses were built of flints and bricks, which might indicate repairing of the well or that the original above ground part of the well was finished with bricks (Fig. 2d). Stratigraphically the construction cut of well 105 cut into the subsoil (103); however there is possibility that originally the well cut from topsoil (101), which was removed during the construction of the first extension approximately in the mid 20th century.

4.2 Reliability of Results

The reliability of the results is considered to be good. The archaeological watching brief took place in the changeable weather conditions with good light and visibility.

Excellent cooperation from the ground workers ensured that sufficient time was allowed to investigate and record the archaeological features to the appropriate standards.



Plate 3: Well 104, looking south

5 FINDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL REMAINS

5.1 Pottery by David Gilbert

A sample of post-medieval pottery were taken from two contexts (103) and (110) for identification and not retained. This was recorded utilizing the coding system and chronology of the Reading Waterfront type-series (Underwood 1997), the following fabrics were noted:

Context (103)

REW Red earthenware

Context (110)

REW Red earthenware

Bf2 Salt-glazed Stoneware: Barrel jug

Bf3 Salt-glazed Stoneware: Blacking bottle

Bf4 Salt-glazed Stoneware: Light grey

Bf8 Salt-glazed Stoneware: Purple/grey glaze

CRM Creamware

WHSG White salt-glaze

WHW White ware

WHEW Mass produced White earthenware
BWPW Blue and White printed ware
BEW Earthenware, Surrey Type

Maling ware marmalade and paste pots were present in context (110); the impressed marks on the base in curved writing reading “MALING”. This type of mark dates from 1817 onwards, although replaced by the mark “C.T.MALING” in 1853 (MCS).

5.2 *Tile by David Gilbert*

A single fragment of a Minton Pugin glazed encaustic tile was recovered from context (110), c. 1840+.

5.3 **Environmental Remains**

No deposits suitable for environmental analysis were identified, and no samples were taken

6 **DISCUSSION**

The archaeological watching brief at Shelleys, High Street, Cookham, was successful in proving that no archaeological remains related to Saxon settlement or medieval village were observed in the excavated foundation trench for the new extension.

All archaeological features recorded during the watching brief were related to late 19th/early 20th century backyard activities.

Wall **102** represents a boundary wall between Shelleys and neighbouring cottage The Boutique. This wall is clearly visible on 1:2500 Ordnance Survey maps dated 1899 and 1912-25. On the OS map 1:2500 dated to 1972 are visible changes between the boundary and wall **102** is not visible.

No dating evidence was recovered from well **104**, although based on the construction style and the fact that wall was still in use in first half of 20th century (based on a neighbour’s oral testimony) the well could be dated to the late post-medieval period.

Pit 109, which contains a large quantity of discarded late 19th century pottery, ceramic building material, fragments of window and bottle glass (see Section 5) represents a rubbish pit related to domestic activities. The slightly unusual find for the village environment was a fragment of Minton Pugin glazed encaustic tile, which is commonly related to the high status public and private buildings.

7 **ARCHIVE**

Archive Contents

The archive consists of the following:

Paper record

Physical record

Planning Consultation Response
The project report
The primary site record

None of finds were retained

The archive currently is maintained by John Moore Heritage Services and will be deposited when a suitable depository is available.

8 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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