



AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

AT

102 CAMP ROAD, GERRARDS CROSS,

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

SU 9931 8809

On behalf of

Manhattan Properties

MAY 2009

REPORT FOR	Manhattan Properties Manhattan House Manhattan Business Park Westgate Ealing W5 1UP
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Summary

A watching brief was conducted by John Moore Heritage Services during the ground work at 102 Camp Road, Gerrards Cross. The investigation revealed no archaeological features or other remains.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Location (Figure 1)

The site lies at NGR SU 9931 8809 on a slope approaching the ramparts of the Iron Age bilvallate hillfort of Bulstrode Camp, a Scheduled Ancient Monument (Scheduled Ancient Monument County No 11). The underlying geology is Palaeogene Woolwich and Reading Beds.

1.2 Planning Background

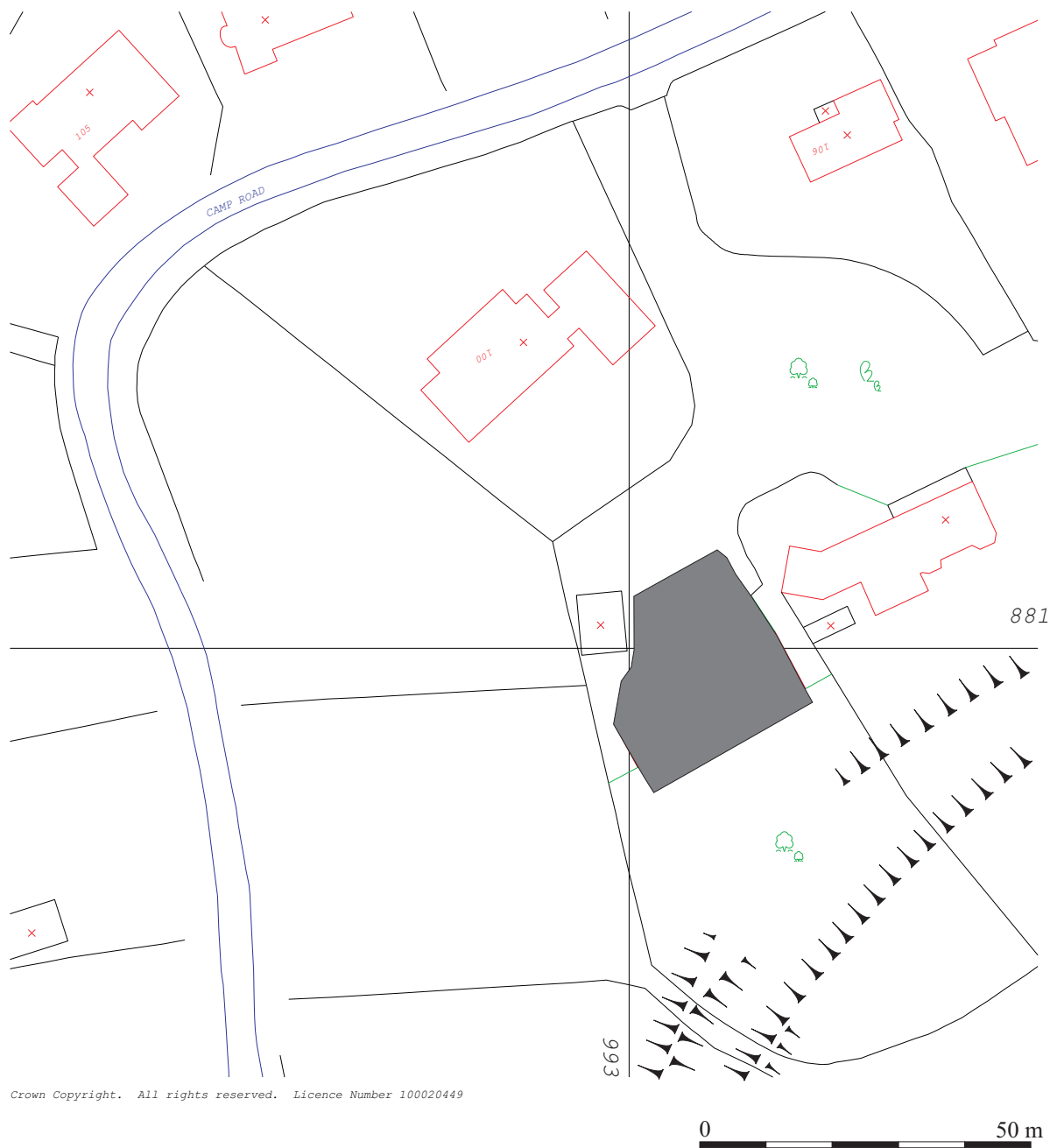
South Bucks District Council granted planning permission for a replacement building at 102 Camp Road, Gerrards Cross. A condition was attached requiring the implementation of an archaeological salvage recording on recent ground works and a watching brief during further groundworks. This is in line with PPG 16 and Local Plan policies.

1.3 Archaeological Background

Bulstrode Camp is the largest monument of its kind in the County, covering over 21 acres. The defences consist of a double rampart for the greater part of the circumference. Where the inner bank is best preserved (on the eastern side) it rises to a height of 1.8-2.1m above the interior surface and is over 3.6m above the bottom of the inner ditch. The outer bank is 1.8m-2.1m above the bottom of the outer ditch. The overall breadth of the defensive work is about 30m (Fox and Clark 1925). The hillfort was investigated in 1924 when small-scale excavation produced only three small fragments of early Iron Age pottery and traces of a hearth (*ibid*). A geophysical survey in 2003 identified a series of anomalies that were speculatively interpreted as hut circles, avenues and a 'long barrow' (Gover 2003).

A watching brief was undertaken at 90 Camp Road where ground works had already been completed. The new work had truncated a bank, thought to have been part of the hillfort. At Fosse Cottage a sewerage pipe through the ditch and bank recorded two possible postholes in the interior. A recent evaluation by Archaeological Solutions at 44 Camp Road just outside the southern rampart of the hillfort produced a series of medieval features dating from the 11th-13th century (Archaeological Solutions 2005). A watching brief at 96 Camp Road recorded no archaeological features (JMHS 2006).

At Long Patch, Camp Road (CAS 02252, NGR SU 9929 8768) a Neolithic/Bronze Age scraper/borer has been found while a Palaeolithic axe fragment or flake has come from Bulstrode Park (CAS 0838, NGR SU 9900 8850). A Neolithic or Bronze Age hammerstone has been found in the garden of Diavolezza (CAS 05318, NGR SU 9927 8812) just to the west of this development site. An Iron Age silver coin of Cunobelin has been found in the parish (CAS 0835).



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A 1686 Estate Map of Bulstrode Park shows a dwelling of considerable size with three other buildings further to the north west. The proposed development site would have been within 'The Park' with the park pale to the north of the property. The area was woodland. A further map of 1784 (The working rough map of Bulstrode) shows that this area of the Park was no longer covered by trees.

2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION

The aims of the investigation as laid out in the Written Scheme of Investigation were as follows:

- 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 Late Iron Age, Roman or medieval deposits..

3 STRATEGY

3.1 Research Design

John Moore Heritage Services carried out the work to a Written Scheme of Investigation agreed with Buckinghamshire County Archaeological Service. Standard John Moore Heritage Services 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.

The recording was carried out in accordance with the standards specified by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (1994).

3.2 Methodology

The majority of the groundwork was monitored. This work was conducted using a mechanical excavator employing a toothless 2.5m ditching bucket for topsoil stripping. The drilling for the pile foundations was also monitored.

Unfortunately JMHS was not informed of all works and these were not monitored, as detailed below.

4 RESULTS

All features were assigned individual context numbers. This number covered both the feature cut and the fill for pits, unless the feature was sample excavated by hand. Context numbers in [] indicate features i.e. pit cuts; while numbers in () show feature fills or deposits of material. A general description of the feature fills is given.

Salvage recording was carried out on a large open excavation near the centre of the site. This excavation was roughly square in plan and resulted from the demolition and clearance of the previous building.

The northwest section showed an upper layer (1) of 0.26m of made ground for a tarmac drive containing mixed modern material. Under this deposit was a layer of plateau gravel in dark grey silty sand (2) approximately 0.29m thick. Below this was a stiff orange-brown to pale yellow clay (3).

The southwest section showed 1.6m of made ground (1) with clays and gravels, some rubble, stone and brick. This was directly above a layer of dark silty sand with plateau gravel (2) that was 0.2m thick. Below this was a stiff orange-brown to pale yellow clay (3).

The southern edge of the site has been terraced. A brick wall retained a higher garden to the south. This terracing exposed at least 0.4m of natural clays and gravels. Under this was a banded deposit 0.55m thick of bedded gravels, pale grey sand, orange sand and then pale yellow grey sand. Below this was a stiff orange-brown to pale yellow clay (3) up to 0.5m thick.

The lowest natural deposit encountered was a tenacious mottled clay light orange to grey in colour (4). This deposit was over 3m thick.

The monitoring of the drilling for the pile foundations recorded a similar sequence of deposits.

The ground was then reduced inside the footprint of the piles and extending outside this foot print to the north by at least 5m. John Moore Heritage Services were only informed of this action after its completion and therefore only the sections could be monitored. Again a similar sequence of deposits was recorded, although some slight undulations of these deposits were noted. This was probably due to rotational slip on the steep slope.

The section cut back for the new retaining wall to the rear of the house against the garden was monitored. No features were seen apart from those associated with the previous garden hard-landscaping for the fountain and old retaining wall.

Excavation for new services from the house to manholes in front of it was monitored; however the connection to the Camp Road (approximately 20m in length) was not as JMHS was not informed when this was to be undertaken. This length would have crossed the line of the 17th century Park Pale. This also has resulted in the delay to issuing the report.

5 FINDS

5.1 Pottery

Sherds of 19th – 20th century Mass-produced White Earthenwares were noted from the made ground (1). These were not retained.

6 DISCUSSION

The salvage action recorded no archaeological features in the exposed sections of the excavated area. The sequence of natural layers revealed were notably similar to those recorded at 96 Camp Road (JMHS 2006).

The watching brief uncovered no archaeological features other than modern features associated with the former house.

It has to be noted that ground reduction across large areas of the site occurred before John Moore Heritage Services were informed. Subsequently only the sections in this area could be examined as the lowest natural deposit (4) had already been reached. However the lack of artefacts along with the absence of any signs of earlier features and coupled with the results at 96 Camp Road indicate that nothing of significance was on the site.

7 ARCHIVE

Archive Contents

The archive consists of the following:

Paper record

The project brief

Written scheme of investigation

The project report

The primary site records

The archive currently is maintained by John Moore Heritage Services and will be transferred to the County Museums' Store under accession number 2005.120.

8 BIBLIOGRAPHY

Archaeological Solutions 2005 *Evaluation at 44 Camp Road, Gerrards Cross*

Fox, C & Clarke, L C G, 1925 Excavations in Bulstrode Camp. *Recs of Bucks* 11, 283-288

Gover, J 2003 Bulstrode 'Iron Age' Camp, Gerrards Cross. A Geophysical Survey. Newsletter of Chess Valley Archaeological & Historical Society

Institute of Field Archaeologists, 1994 *Standard and Guidance for an archaeological watching brief*. Revised Sept 1999

JMHS 2006 *An archaeological watching brief at Wykehurst, 96 Camp Road, Gerrards Cross, Buckinghamshire*.