JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

KINGFISHER, HAM ISLAND,

OLD WINDSOR, BERKSHIRE

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT

For

Mr G Spice

JANUARY 2011

REPORT FOR	Mr. G Spice Bear Shack Ham Island Old Windsor Berkshire SL4 2JT
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Summary

John Moore Heritage Services maintained an archaeological watching brief in advance of the construction of a new development at Kingfisher, Ham Island, Old Windsor SLT 2JT (Planning Ref: 10/01346). The ground works involved the excavation of wall footing trenches and cross beam trenches around the footprint of the new build. No archaeological features or finds were observed.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Location and Geology *(Figure 1)*

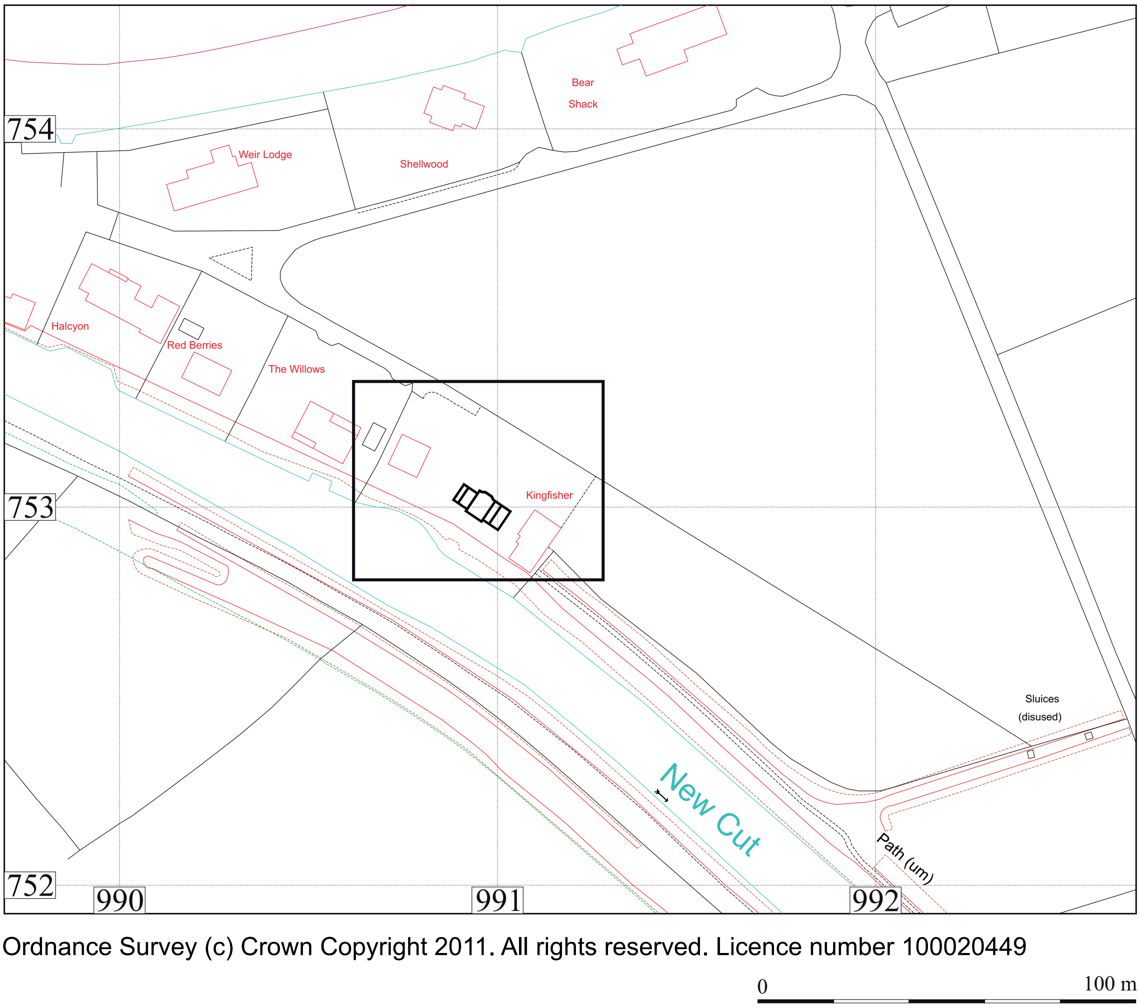
The site is located at Ham Island, Old Windsor adjacent to the New Cut (SU 9908 7529). The site lies at *c*. 20m AOD (taken from nearest bench mark at Ham Bridge) and the underlying geology according to the British Geological Survey (Sheet 269; 1:50 000) is Shepperton Gravel of the first gravel terrace. As a result of the trench excavations the geology was seen to be gravels with patches of light brown-orange clay silt in it.

1.2 Planning Background

Planning application number 10/01346 submitted to The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead was granted for the demolition of the existing building and replacement with a single storey detached dwelling. The Principal Archaeology Officer (Fiona Macdonald) for Berkshire Archaeology Service asked John Moore Heritage Services to prepare a *Written Scheme of Investigation* (WSI) which outlined the method by which the archaeological work would be carried out in order to preserve remains of significance.

The WSI (JMHS 2010) was in line with new Government guidance PPS 5 and the Berkshire Local Plan soon to be replaced by the Local Development Framework. PPS 5 Policy HE12.3 states that:

where the loss of the whole or a material part of a heritage asset's significance is justified, local planning authorities should require the developer to record and advance understanding of the significance of the heritage asset before it is lost, using planning conditions or obligations as appropriate. Developers should publish this evidence and deposit copies of the reports with the relevant historic environment record. Local planning authorities should require any archive generated to be deposited with a local museum or other public depository willing to receive it. Local planning authorities should impose planning conditions or obligations to ensure such work is carried out in a timely manner and that the completion of the exercise is properly secured.



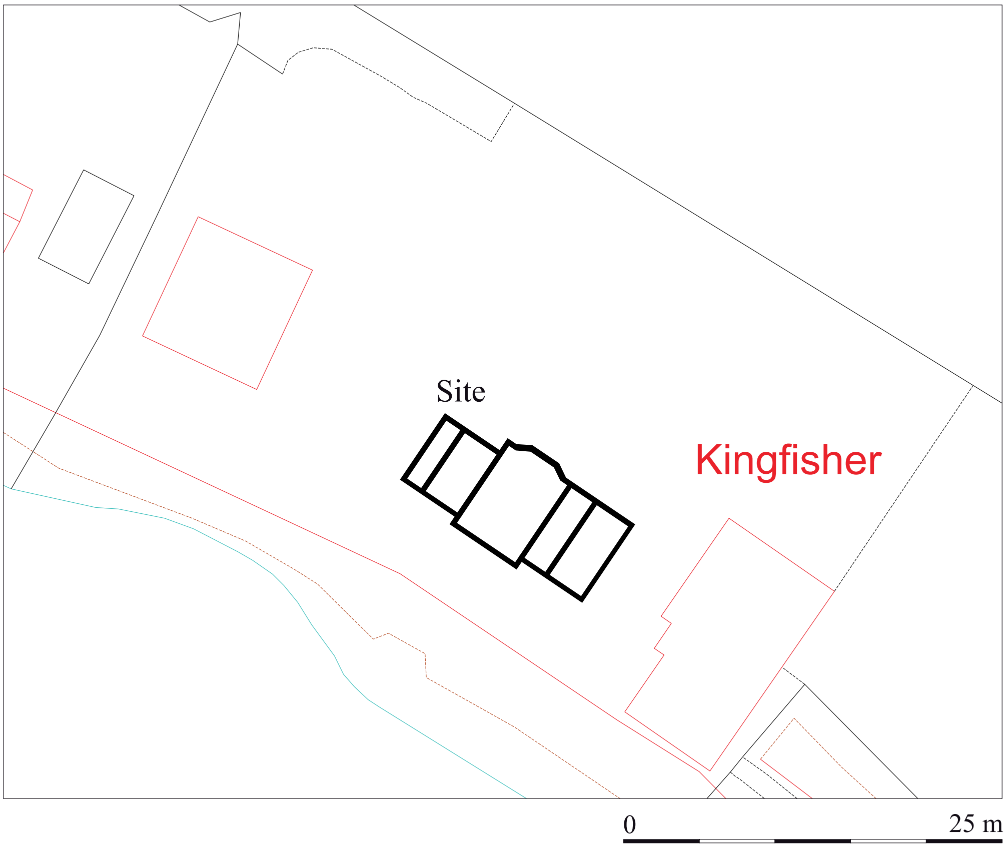


Figure 1. Site location

1.3 Archaeological Background

Edward the Confessor granted the manor of Old Windsor to the Abbot of Westminster in 1066. William the Conqueror, however, regained possession in exchange for lands in Essex. The manor comprised 20 hides, of which 10 hides were held by various tenants (Williams & Martin 1992). A priest held 1½ hides at Old Windsor at the time of the Great Survey, and therefore probably a church existed. In 1189 the church of Old Windsor was granted by Richard I to Waltham Abbey for the hospitality of the monastery, being then described as a chapel belonging to St. John's Church at New Windsor. In 1224 the abbot obtained a licence to inclose his burial-ground, through which the king's highway passed, provided he substituted a new road near it.

Old Windsor remained with the Crown, being leased out from time to time. Katherine Countess of Devon and Anne wife of Sir Thomas Hayward, daughters and heirs of Edward IV, quitclaimed the manor to King Henry VIII in 1511 (VCH 1923). In 1606 the site of the manor was leased to Richard Powney, who was succeeded about 1698 by his son Richard. In 1699 the lease was renewed to Richard's son John, whose son Penyston was dealing with the manor in 1737. After his death in 1757 his son and heir, Penyston Portlock Powney, retained the lease of the site until 1786, in which year he assigned his interest in it to Henry Isherwood. The latter died in 1787, leaving a son a minor, who at some date previous to 1799 conveyed it to Arthur Vansittart. In 1923 the manor was still held by the Crown (VCH 1923).

Prehistoric ditches have been recorded 100m to the east (SMR 00347.85.001, SMR 00347.85.002). Features and artefacts dating from the Mesolithic to Bronze Age have been recorded 250m to the east (SMR 00347.84.003, SMR 00347.84.100). A Late Iron Age – early Roman field system has also been recorded in this area (SMR 00347.84.200). A Late Roman enclosure and field system lies 300m to the east (SMR 00347.84.300, SMR 00347.84.200, SMR 00347.84.500).

The early medieval settlement lies 500m to the south (SMR 00347.00.000, SMR 00347.20.000, SMR 00347.40.000). This dates from the 7th to 10th centuries and is associated with the Royal Palace (SMR00347.61.000). The royal palace (and its associated settlement) was abandoned for the New Windsor site in the reign of Henry I (1100-1135) (SMR 00347.70.000). Although settlement continues in the area with such buildings of 13th -14th century date referred to in contemporary documents as 'the Grange' (SMR 00347.81.000). The Grade II* listed parish Church of St Peter and St Andrew, dates to the early C13, chancel and nave partly rebuilt mid C14. It was restored in 1863-4 by Sir Gilbert Scott (SMR 00347.82.000).

An estate map produced by J. Sturgis c.1820 shows the site in an area recorded as the Ham Meadow in a field marked as "New Allotment". The New Cut is not present on this map the first map to record this is the 1834 Tithe Map. The Ordnance Survey map of 1881 shows the area to have a bank parallel to the New Cut next to open fields.

2.0 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION

It was stated within the WSI (JMHS 2010) that the aims of the archaeological evaluation were to:

- Record any archaeological remains that will be impacted on by the development
- In particular to record the potential for Saxon features relating to the 'Royal Palace' site

3 STRATEGY

3.1 Research Design

Site procedures for the investigation and recording of potential archaeological deposits and features were defined in the *Written Scheme of Investigation*. The work was carried out in accordance with the standards specified by the Institute for Archaeologists (1994) and the procedures laid down in MAP2 (English Heritage 1991).

3.2 Methodology

An initial trench along the line of an out wall was excavated to the natural geology to test the composition of the bank and soil sequence. The area of the footprint of the building was then reduced, by 0.5m from present ground level, to form a level surface. The foundation trenches were then excavated from this prepared surface by a tracked excavator fitted with a toothed ditching bucket. The depths of the trenches were usually at 2m beneath the present ground level. The natural gravels were often reached at 1.5m beneath the present ground level. The monitored areas included all wall footing trenches and under floor cross beam trenches. It was decided after consultation with the Berkshire Archaeology (Fiona Macdonald) that it was not necessary to monitor the service trench as the impact was limited and would not impede on any potential archaeology.

Standard John Moore Heritage Services techniques were employed throughout, involving the completion of a written record for each deposit encountered, with scale plans and sections drawings compiled where appropriate. A general photographic record was produced.

4 RESULTS

All deposits and features were assigned individual context numbers. Context numbers in [ ] indicate features i.e. pit cuts; while numbers in ( ) show feature fills or deposits of material.

4.1 Excavation Results *(Figure 1)*

The trenches were excavated to a general depth of 1.9m beneath the present ground surface. The lowest deposit noted within the trenches consisted of natural gravels and clays (04). Above the natural was a *c*. 0.40 thick dark brown-grey silty clay buried topsoil (03), which contained two bones from a large animal likely to have been a cow. Above this was a *c*. 1.6m thick deposit of mottled gravels and clays derived from upcast from the New Cut and covered the area of development (02). Across the entire site was modern topsoil (01) with modern finds throughout.

Table 1; Summary of Context list

Context	Type	Description	Depth (m)	Width (m)	Length (m)	Finds	Date
01	Layer	Recent topsoil	0.10-0.20m	Tr.	Tr.	None retained	Modern
02	Layer	Mottled gravels and clays. 'upcast' from New Cut	1m – 1.6m	Tr.	Tr.	None	
03	Layer	Dark brown grey silty clay- buried topsoil	0.40-0.70m	Tr.	Tr.	Animal bone	
04	Layer	Natural Gravels and sands	/	Tr.	Tr.	None	

4.2 Reliability of Techniques and Results

The excavation of the trenches took place in favourable weather conditions but the depth of the trenches (*c*. 2m) meant they could not safely be entered until shuttering had been erected at which point the sections were covered. The base of the trenches were observed for archaeology during machine excavation, but were quickly covered over during general levelling meaning a detailed hand clean of the natural surface was not possible. However, it should be stated here that a high confidence rating is given that no archaeological features or finds existed within the impact areas of the development.

5 FINDS

Two bones from a large mammal probably a cow were discovered within the buried topsoil (03).

6 DISCUSSION

The depth of overburden was deep mainly due to the upcast created from the New Cut located immediately adjacent to the site (*c*. 1830 AD). The buried ploughsoil (03) was a thick deposit with no discernable subsoil beneath it. Dumped topsoil from the excavation of the New Cut may have increased the thickness of this layer (03). Alternatively, this could have simply formed during years of general ploughing. The two animal bones found within the deposit would suggest that the soil was ploughsoil.

The lack of archaeological features and finds from this watching brief does not necessarily indicate any lack of archaeology within this area of Ham Island. One of the primary aims at the outset of the investigation was to record the potential for Saxon features due to the close proximity of the Saxon 'Royal Palace'. As a result of the archaeological watching brief no further information regarding the Saxon manor were discovered at the site.

PLATE 1: General site shot - NW

PLATE 2: General shot of site stratigraphy

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