

JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF
ON THE MENAGE, BENNETT END FARM,
BENNETT END, RADNAGE,
BUCKINGHAMSHIRE**

SU 7855 9725

On behalf of

Mr & Mrs J Hogan

April 2002

REPORT FOR Mr J.P. & Mrs S Hogan
Bennett End Farm
Bennett End Road
Radnage
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Summary

An archaeological watching brief took place during the excavations for a rectangular ménage in fields east of Bennett End Farm, Radnage. No archaeological deposits or features were disturbed.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Location (Figure 1)

The site of proposed development is located in fields adjacent to Bennett End Road immediately east of Bennett End Farm, Bennett End, Radnage (NGR SU 7855 9725). The site lies at approximately 130.3m AOD at the bottom of a steep slope from the Ridgeway c. 300m to the south. The ground also slopes gently down across the site from the west to the east. The underlying geology is Middle Chalk and River Valley Gravels.

1.2 Planning Background

Planning permission has been granted for the construction of a rectangular ménage and associated landscaping (01/07721/FUL). Due to the potential presence of below ground archaeological deposits a condition was attached requiring that the applicant would be responsible for the undertaking of an archaeological watching brief during the period of groundworks. The County Archaeological Service (CAS) then issued a Brief for the work (CAS 2002). John Moore Heritage Services (JMHS) in accordance with a *Written Scheme of Investigation* agreed with Buckinghamshire County Archaeological Service, on behalf of the local planning authority, carried out such a watching brief.

1.3 Archaeological Background

The development site lies close to the site of a possible prehistoric burial mound and also to the findspot of a cluster of late Iron Age and Romano-British coins, found in 1984.

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 remains that may relate to the possible prehistoric burial activity.
- In addition to record any possible remains associated with the late prehistoric and Romano-British finds of coins.

Figure 1. Site location and excavated area

Scale 1:2500

- To make available to interested parties the results of the investigation subject to any confidentiality restrictions.

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 Services, on behalf of the local planning authority. 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.

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

3.2 Methodology

The ground level within the proposed ménage area, a rectangle approximately 60m x 20m, was reduced using a 360° excavator with a 1.9m wide toothless ditching bucket. To achieve a level surface across the site the arena was excavated from the west to the east, decreasing in depth towards the east. This resulted in an actual excavated area measuring 22.1m wide and 32.2m-38.4m long at the west end of the site, at a maximum depth of 650mm in the northwest corner decreasing to the east to ground level (shown as the red shaded area in Figure 1). An archaeologist monitored these operations.

4 RESULTS

The earliest deposit encountered in the excavated area was a firm, mid brownish red, silty clay that contained frequent small and medium sized rough flint fragments (02). The depth of excavation exposed a maximum 350mm of this deposit and it was considered to be a natural deposit. This was overlain by a ploughsoil (01), a friable, dark greyish brown, silty clay deposit containing frequent medium sized flint fragments, varying in thickness from 300mm in the north to 200mm in the south and west of the trench. Occasional small sherds of late medieval pottery, modern pottery, brick and tile were observed on the surface of the topsoil near, and upslope from, the arena but were not retained. Two modern service trenches (03), 600-640mm wide and 4m apart, filled with a mixture of chalk and flint, were observed running across the north of the site parallel with Bennett End Road.

5 FINDS

There were no finds recovered from the site.

6 CONCLUSIONS

The excavation of the arena did not disturb any archaeological deposits or features.

7 BIBLIOGRAPHY

Buckinghamshire County Archaeological Service, 2002. Bennett End Farm, Radnage. *Brief for an Archaeological Watching Brief*.

Institute of Field Archaeologists. 1994. *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluations*.