

The Old Paddock Epsom Racecourse Surrey



Archaeological Evaluation Report



November 2005



Client: CgMs Consulting

Issue N^o: 1

OA Job N^o: JN 2979

NGR: TQ 2140 5855

Client Name: CgMs Consulting
Client Ref No: CgMs 6262
Document Title: The Old Paddock, Epsom Racecourse, Surrey

Document Type: Evaluation

Issue Number: 1

National Grid Reference: TQ 2140 5855
Planning Reference: n/a

OA Job Number: JN 2979
Site Code: EPOP 05
Invoice Code: EPOP EV
Receiving Museum: Bourne Museum
Museum Accession No: EPOP 05

Prepared by: Guy Cockin
Position: Supervisor
Date: 7th November 2005

Checked by: J Hiller
Position: Senior Project Manager
Date: 9th November 2005

Approved by: N Shepherd
Position: Head of Fieldwork
Date: 16th November 2005

Signed.....

Document File Location X:\Epsom Old Paddock\Epsom Final
Rep\evalreptop2.doc

Graphics File Location Servergo:/oaupubs1_Ithru'POPAEV/EPOPEV/05*RAB/
GS**15.11.05

Illustrated by Georgina Slater

Disclaimer:

This document has been prepared for the titled project or named part thereof and should not be relied upon or used for any other project without an independent check being carried out as to its suitability and prior written authority of Oxford Archaeology being obtained. Oxford Archaeology accepts no responsibility or liability for the consequences of this document being used for a purpose other than the purposes for which it was commissioned. Any person/party using or relying on the document for such other purposes agrees, and will by such use or reliance be taken to confirm their agreement to indemnify Oxford Archaeology for all loss or damage resulting therefrom. Oxford Archaeology accepts no responsibility or liability for this document to any party other than the person/party by whom it was commissioned.

Oxford Archaeology
© Oxford Archaeological Unit Ltd 2005

Janus House
Osney Mead
Oxford OX2 0ES
t: (0044) 01865 263800
f: (0044) 01865 793496

e: info@oxfordarch.co.uk
w: www.oxfordarch.co.uk

Oxford Archaeological Unit Limited is a Registered Charity No: 285627

**The Old Paddock,
Epsom Racecourse, Surrey**

NGR TQ 2140 5855

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT

CONTENTS

1	Introduction	1
1.1	Location and scope of work	1
1.2	Geology and topography	1
1.3	Archaeological and historical background	1
2	Evaluation Aims	2
3	Evaluation Methodology	2
4	Results: Descriptions	3
4.1	Description of deposits	3
4.2	Finds and environmental deposits	3
5	Discussion and Interpretation	3
6	Appendices	4
1	Table of Context Information	4
2	Bibliography	4
3	Summary of Site Details	5

LIST OF FIGURES

- Fig. 1 Site location
Fig. 2 Location of trenches
Fig. 3 Trench 6, plan and sections

SUMMARY

In November 2005, Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out a six-trench field evaluation at the Old Paddock, Epsom Racecourse, Surrey (NGR TQ2140 5855). The work was undertaken on behalf of CgMs Consulting. The evaluation revealed one undated ditch and a number of tree-throw holes cut into the natural chalk, but no direct evidence for settlement of any period. The site lies away from known water sources and was probably not a favoured location for settlement in the past.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

- 1.1.1 In November 2005, Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out a field evaluation at the Old Paddock, Epsom Racecourse, Surrey (Fig. 1) on behalf of CgMs Consulting. The work was completed prior to demolition of existing structures on the site and the proposed development of a hotel with car park and access road.
- 1.1.2 The site lies in an area of limited archaeological potential. However, as the proposed development extends beyond the existing building footprints on undeveloped land, CgMs recommended to its client that an archaeological field evaluation be undertaken in line with government policy (PPG 16) and the archaeological policies of Epsom and Ewell District Council and Surrey County Council.
- 1.1.3 A Specification for an Archaeological Evaluation was prepared by CgMs Consulting (CgMs 2005a) detailing how the requirements of the Councils' archaeological policies would be met.

1.2 Geology and topography

- 1.2.1 The site is centred at NGR TQ 2140 5855 and is close to the north edge of the North Downs. The area of the development proposal will affect land presently occupied by the 'Old Paddock', a grassed paddock with spectator terraces, located north and west of Langley Vale Road.
- 1.2.2 The underlying geology of the site consists of an extensive outcrop of Upper Chalk, which form the North Downs. The site lies on a gradual north-west facing slope.
- 1.2.3 The highest part of the site, at *c* 120 m OD, is in the south-east, under the Tote Building. From here levels slope downwards through the paddock to the north-west boundary of the site.

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 An Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment has been produced by CgMs Consulting (CgMs 2005b) and the following is a brief summary of that work.
- 1.3.2 The area of the proposed development lies on the north edge of the North Downs, in a general area of low-key archaeological finds. A number of prehistoric finds have been

located in the vicinity of the development area. Mesolithic, Neolithic and Bronze Age flints are known from Epsom Downs and the racecourse (SMR refs. 923, 936, 913) and Iron Age pottery sherds were recovered from Tattenham Corner, south-east of the development site (SMR ref. 920). The finds are not concentrated, however, suggesting localised activity rather than significant settlement during any of these periods.

- 1.3.3 The projected line of Stane Street linking London with Chichester passes about 1 km north-west of the site and two separate findspots of Roman pottery have been found to the south-east of the site. A coin of Constantine I (SMR ref. 919) was found at the Downs Hotel (now the 'Rubbing House') to the east of the site.
- 1.3.4 Anglo-Saxon activity is restricted to a lone find of a gold pendant dating to the 7th century, though the exact provenance is unknown (SMR ref. 3822). No evidence of medieval activity has been identified in the vicinity of the site. Horse racing is documented on Epsom Downs from the late 17th century onwards and the present racecourse dates to 1872 (CgMs, 9-13).

2 EVALUATION AIMS

- 2.1.1 To establish the presence/absence of archaeological remains within the proposal area and to determine the location, form, extent, condition, nature, character, quality and date of any archaeological remains present - particular reference was to be given to prehistoric remains.
- 2.1.2 To establish the ecofactual and environmental potential of archaeological deposits and features and evaluate the impact of previous land use.
- 2.1.3 To make available the results of the investigation to provide sufficient information for further archaeological mitigation, if required.

3 EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

- 3.1.1 The evaluation consisted of six 20 m long by 1.8 m wide trial trenches (Fig. 2) opened using a mechanical excavator with a ditching bucket under archaeological supervision. A contingency for two further trenches was available but was not eventually implemented.
- 3.1.2 Excavation was undertaken to the top of natural geology or the first archaeologically significant horizon, whichever was encountered first. The trenches were cleaned by hand and the revealed features were sampled to determine their extent and nature, and to retrieve finds and environmental samples.
- 3.1.3 All features and deposits were issued with unique context numbers, and context recording was in accordance with the established practise detailed in the OA Field Manual (OA 1992) and IFA Guidance for field evaluations (IFA 1999). Colour transparency and black-and-white negative photographs were taken of all features and trenches.

4 RESULTS: DESCRIPTIONS

4.1 Description of deposits

Trenches 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5

- 4.1.1 All five trenches were excavated to the top of the natural geology, a firm white tabular chalk with occasional flint nodules. The sequence above this level was the same in all five of these trenches, where the natural chalk was overlain by an approximately 0.12 m thick layer of subsoil, a mid-red/brown clay silt with frequent pieces of weathered chalk.
- 4.1.2 Above this was a 0.2 m thick layer of topsoil. A number of these trenches revealed irregular shaped features, which upon investigation proved to be tree root disturbance. Trenches 2, 3, 4 and 5 all contained modern services within plastic pipes. These are probably field drains and/or electric cables and all of cut the subsoil.

Trench 6

- 4.1.3 Trench 6 (Fig. 3) contained the same soil sequence as trenches 1-5. However, three features cutting the natural chalk (609) and sealed by layer 602 were investigated. Two of these features (605 and 607) were irregular or sub-oval features, which were interpreted as tree-throw holes or root disturbance, due to their disturbed natural chalk fills and irregular profiles. However, at the east end of Trench 6 a shallow ditch (603) was revealed aligned north-east/south-west. This feature was 0.59 m wide and 0.12 m deep, with shallow concave sides and a rounded base. Its fill (604) was a friable mid brown silt, but contained no finds.

4.2 Finds and environmental deposits

- 4.2.1 No archaeological finds were recovered from the site and no deposits were identified that warranted environmental sampling.

5 DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION

- 5.1.1 The evaluation results show very little archaeological evidence in the area of the proposed development, with only one undated ditch revealed and it may be assumed that the development area does not lie within an area of prehistoric or Roman activity.
- 5.1.2 The ditch may represent evidence of field systems from these periods, or later, but this could not be confirmed with any dating evidence. It may be that the absence of a reliable water source here meant that the land has always been at some distance from any settlement. The results of the evaluation show that there is little evidence for truncation except by ploughing across the site.

6 APPENDICES

1 TABLE OF CONTEXT INFORMATION

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Ctx No</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Width (m)</i>	<i>Thick. (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>	<i> Finds</i>
001	100	Layer		0.2	Topsoil	-
	101	Layer		0.2	Subsoil	-
	102	Layer		-	Natural	-
002	200	Layer		0.22	Topsoil	-
	201	Layer		0.12	Subsoil	-
	202	Layer		-	Natural	-
003	300	Layer		0.17	Topsoil	-
	301	Layer		0.12	Subsoil	-
	302	Layer		-	Natural	-
004	401	Layer		0.14	Topsoil	-
	402	Layer		0.12	Subsoil	-
	403	Layer		-	Natural	-
005	501	Layer		0.22	Topsoil	-
	502	Layer		0.1	Subsoil	-
	503	Layer		-	Natural	-
006	601	Layer		0.15	Topsoil	-
	602	Layer		0.1	Subsoil	-
	603	Cut	0.59	0.12	Ditch	-
	604	Fill		0.12	Fill of 603	-
	605	Cut	1.1	0.18	Tree throw hole	-
	606	Fill		0.18	Fill of 605	-
	607	Cut	0.65	0.11	Tree throw hole	-
	608	Fill		0.11	Fill of 607	
	609	Layer		-	Natural	-

2 BIBLIOGRAPHY

CgMs Consulting 2005a *Specification for an Archaeological Evaluation. The Old Paddock, Epsom Racecourse, Epsom*

CgMs Consulting 2005b *Archaeological Desk Based Assessment of the Old Paddock, Epsom Racecourse, Epsom*

IFA 1999 *Standard and Guidance for archaeological evaluations*

OA 1992 *Fieldwork Manual* (1st edition, August 1992 ed. D Wilkinson)

3 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

Site name: The Old Paddock, Epsom, Surrey

Site code: EPOP 05

Grid reference: TQ 2140 5855

Type of evaluation: Six trial trenches

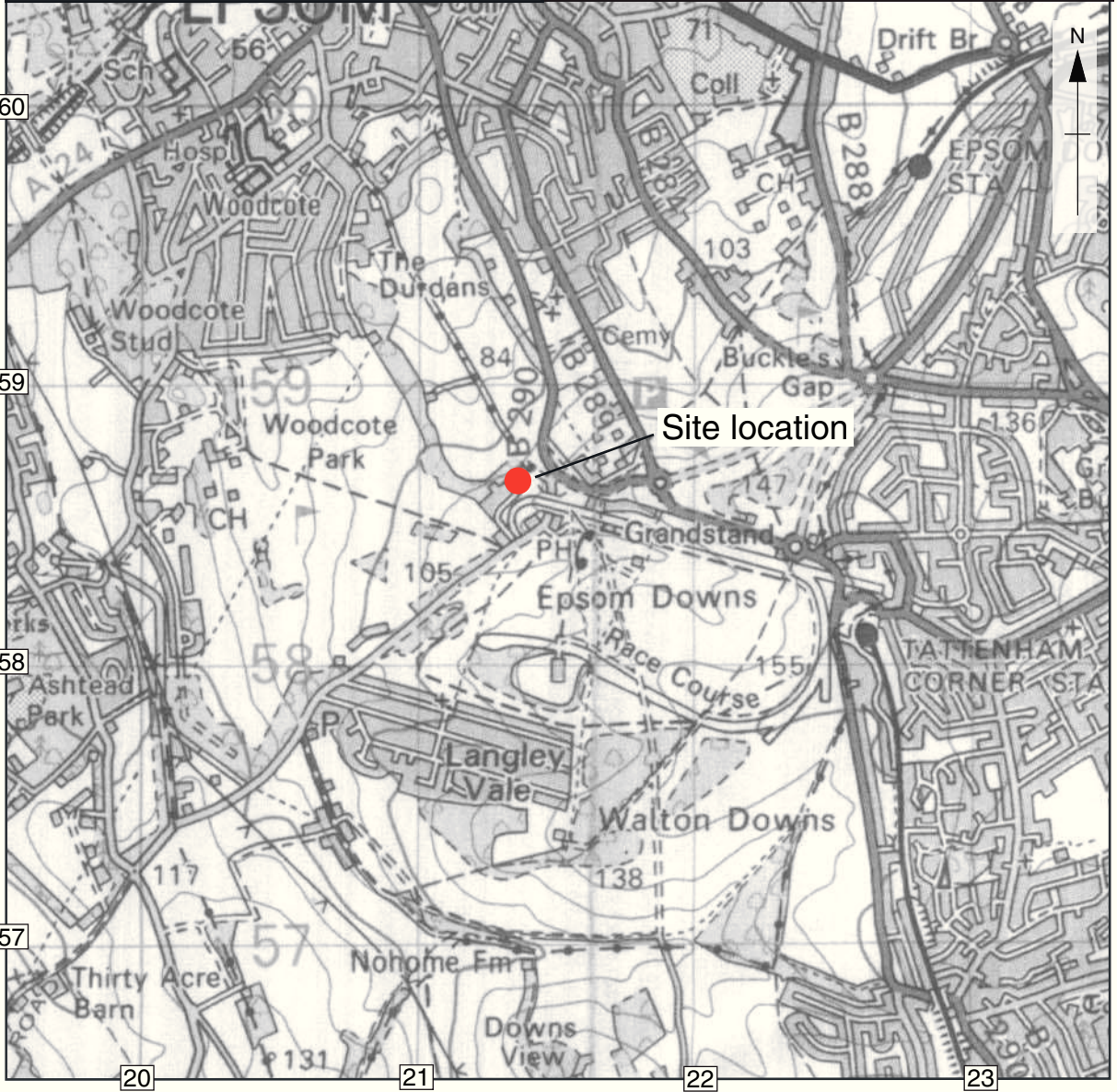
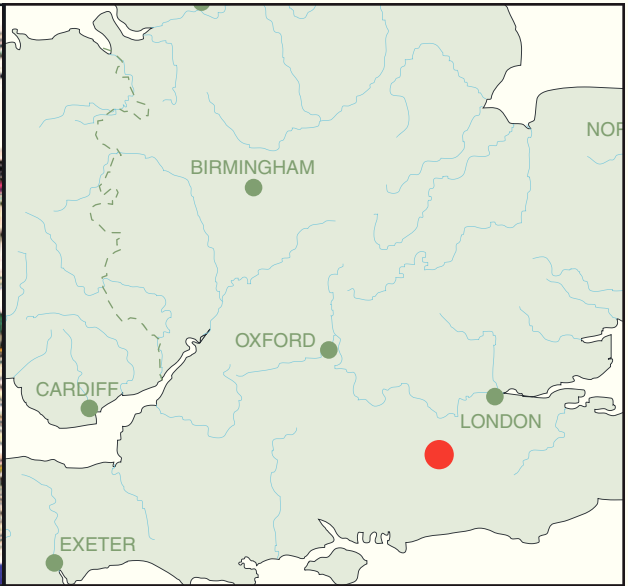
Date and duration of project: 31st October - 3rd November 2005, 4 days

Area of site: c 1.1 ha.

Summary of results: One undated ditch and a number of undated tree-throw holes. An undated soil sealed the natural chalk geology beneath the present paddock topsoil and grass.

Location of archive: The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with Bourne Museum in due course.

Servergo:/oupubst1_1 thru P*OPA05*OPAEV*Old Paddock, Epsom*RAB*1111.11.05



Scale 1:25,000

Reproduced from the Explorer 1:25,000 scale by permission of the Ordnance Survey on behalf of The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office
 © Crown Copyright 1998. All rights reserved. Licence No. AL 10005569

Figure 1: Site location



Trench 6
Plan

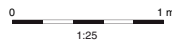
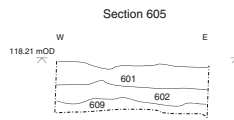
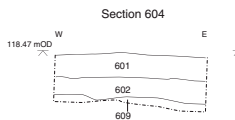
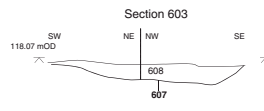
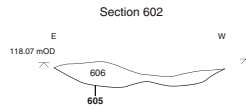
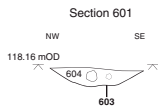


Figure 3: Trench 6 plan and sections



**Head Office/Registered Office/
OA South**

Janus House
Osney Mead
Oxford OX2 0ES

t: +44 (0) 1865 263 800
f: +44 (0) 1865 793 496
e: info@oxfordarch.co.uk
w: <http://thehumanjourney.net>

OA North

Mill 3
Moor Lane
Lancaster LA1 1GF

t: +44 (0) 1524 541 000
f: +44 (0) 1524 848 606
e: [oanorth@thehumanjourney.net](mailto: oanorth@thehumanjourney.net)
w: <http://thehumanjourney.net>

OA East

15 Trafalgar Way
Bar Hill
Cambridgeshire
CB23 8SQ

t: +44 (0) 1223 850 500
f: +44 (0) 1223 850 599
e: [oaeast@thehumanjourney.net](mailto: oaeast@thehumanjourney.net)
w: <http://thehumanjourney.net>



Director: David Jennings, BA MIFA FSA

*Oxford Archaeology Ltd is a
Private Limited Company, N^o: 1618597
and a Registered Charity, N^o: 285627*