

**Archaeological Monitoring  
at Recreation Ground, School Lane  
Watton-at-Stone  
Hertfordshire, SG14 3SF**

**NGR: TL 30187 19055**

**Site Code: WASH16  
HHER enquiry No: 71/16**

**ASE Report No: 2016445**



**November 2016**

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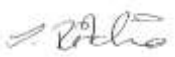
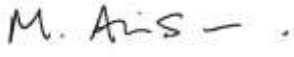
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## **Abstract**

*This report presents the results of archaeological monitoring carried out by Archaeology South-East at Recreation Ground, School Lane, Watton-at-Stone, Hertfordshire, SG14 3SF. The work was commissioned by Watton-at-Stone Parish Council, and carried out between the 3rd and 7th October 2016.*

*The monitoring was undertaken within part of the recreation ground during groundworks for the construction of a new tennis court. The site was previously evaluated in 2007 and archaeological remains of Roman date established to be present.*

*The monitoring revealed the presence of further remains. Cut into the clay and gravel natural deposit were a hearth dating to the LIA-early Roman period and a linear ditch which went out of use in the late 2nd – mid 3rd century AD. The ditch was established to be the continuation of that found by the evaluation. Sealing these features was c.0.40m of mid-brown clayish-silt subsoil with early/mid post-medieval CBM inclusions. The sequence was overlain by 0.20m of topsoil and grass, the ground surface being at 63.85m – 62.23m OD.*

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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Site Background**

- 1.1.1 Archaeology South-East (ASE), the contracting division of the Centre for Applied Archaeology (CAA), Institute of Archaeology (IoA), University College London (UCL) was commissioned by Watton-at-Stone Parish Council to undertake archaeological monitoring at Recreation Ground, School Lane, Watton-at-Stone, Hertfordshire, SG14 3SF.

### **1.2 Location, Topography and Geology**

- 1.2.1 Watton-at-Stone is a village located between the towns of Stevenage and Hertford, in the valley of the River Beane. The recreation Ground is located in the southeast of the village and is bounded by High Street to the east and School Lane to the north (Figure 1; NGR: TL 30187 19055)
- 1.2.2 The site comprises an area of approximately 0.74 hectares of pasture land to the south of existing tennis courts which form part of the recreation ground. The ground slopes steeply from 63.85m OD to the west down to 62.23m OD in the east.
- 1.2.3 The solid geology of the site is shown by the British Geological Survey (BGS Map Viewer online 2016) as Lewes Nodular Chalk Formation and Seaford Chalk Formation, with overlying glaciofluvial deposits of Sand and Gravel.

### **1.3 Planning Background**

- 1.3.1 Planning permission (Ref. No: 3/13/2016/FP) has been granted for construction of a tennis court adjacent to existing two tennis courts with flood lighting.
- 1.3.2 HCCHEU identified the proposed development as likely to cause ground disturbance in Area of Archaeological Significance 126 defined by information held by the Hertfordshire Historic Environment Record (HHER) as containing evidence of Roman and Medieval occupation, together with the historic core of the village. Evidence of a probable Roman ditch found in an evaluation before an earlier application (Ref: 3/06/1386/FP) for these works (Ref: 3/06/1386/FP) supported this view and HCCHEU advised the Planning Authority to place an archaeological condition upon planning consent. This is in accordance with paragraph 141 of the National Planning Policy Framework and with policies in the East Hertfordshire Local Plan Second Reviews.
- 1.3.3 Condition 2 on the planning permission relates to archaeology and states:

*'No development shall take place within the proposed development site until the applicant, or their agents, or their successors in title, has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation, which has been submitted to the planning authority and approved in writing. This condition will only be considered to be discharged when the planning authority has received and approved an*

*archaeological report of all the required archaeological works, and a commitment to publication has been made.'*

*Reason:*

*To secure the protection and proper provision for any archaeological remains in accordance with policies BH2 and BH3 of the East Herts Local Plan Second Review April 2009.*

- 1.3.4 Pre-determination archaeological site evaluation by trial trenching was undertaken in February 2007, following a brief of works issued by HCC Archaeology Office and an approved Written Scheme of Investigation produced by Essex County Council Field Archaeology Unit (Robertson 2007).

## **1.4 Aims and Objectives**

- 1.4.1 The general aim of the archaeological monitoring was to identify the presence of any archaeological remains during the topsoil strip and groundworks associated with the installation of the tennis courts, new fencing and lighting columns and associated service trenches, and to investigate and record them prior to their potential disturbance/destruction by the development.

- 1.4.2 In addition to the general aims, the following site-specific research objectives were identified:

- determine the extent of the ditch revealed in the evaluation, whether a parallel ditch survives within the Site and, if so, whether the ditches bound a road or trackway, possibly of Roman date.
- Roman infrastructure is identified as a future regional research topic in *Research and Archaeology Revisited: a revised framework for the East of England* (Medlycott 2011), where it is stressed that more information is needed not only on location of roads and trackways, but also variations in structure. The monitoring has the potential to address these points.
- In the event that significant discoveries are made the resulting report will seek to address pertinent research objectives identified in *Research and Archaeology: a framework for the Eastern Counties, 2. Research agenda and strategy* (Brown and Glazebrook 2000) and *Research and Archaeology Revisited: a revised framework for the East of England* (Medlycott 2011).

## **1.5 Scope of Report**

- 1.5.1 This report details the results of the archaeological monitoring carried out on the site between the 3rd – 7th October 2016. This report has been prepared in accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation (ASE 2016).
- 1.5.2 The site work was carried out by Sarah Ritchie, and was managed by Niall Oakey (fieldwork) and Mark Atkinson (post-excavation).

## **2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND**

### **2.1 Overview**

- 2.1.1 The Hertfordshire Historic Environment Record was consulted regarding data on the known archaeological content of the Watton-at-Stone vicinity (HHER enquiry No. 71/16).
- 2.1.2 The Site lies within HCCHEU Area of Archaeological Significance 126, defined by information held by the HHER as containing evidence of Roman and Medieval occupation, together with the historic core of the village.
- 2.1.3 The Roman road from Verulamium to Braughing is known to run close to or within the Site (HHER 4615) and aerial photographs appear to show two parallel ditches running towards the Site from the west (HHER 7665).
- 2.1.4 Remains of a probable Roman building were discovered in the grounds of the Rectory (now Glebe House), in 1957, by the Rector while digging in his chicken run (HHER 1552). Masonry, stone paving and a burnt layer were observed and pottery box tile, glass and metalwork, including a number of late Roman coins, were recovered. Glebe House is c.120m north-east of the tennis court site (Fig. 1). The remains have been conjectured to relate to outbuildings belonging to a large Roman structure in the proximity of the Roman road.
- 2.1.5 Watton first appears in a 10th-century will as *Wattun* and in the Domesday Book (late 11th century) as either *Wodtune* or *Wadtone*.
- 2.1.6 Ordnance Survey mapping from 1880 onwards shows the Site within a field. The cricket ground was established at a date between 1891 and 1923, with the existing tennis court to the north being constructed in the late 20th or early 21st century.

### **2.2 Recent Archaeological Investigations**

- 2.2.1 An archaeological watching brief at the Primary School site, on the northwest edge of the Recreation Ground, in 2007, did not identify any archaeological remains (ASC 2008).
- 2.2.2 Monitoring works on drainage works at St Mary and St Andrew's Church, Watton-at-Stone, c.248m west of the site revealed Roman finds and disarticulated human remains (McDonald 2001).
- 2.2.3 An archaeological survey carried out when the Watton-at-Stone bypass was being constructed apparently revealed no evidence of the Roman road (Dunhill undated, 4).
- 2.2.4 An Iron Age and Roman site at Broom Hall Farm, c. 1.5km north-west of the site, has been subjected to various phases of geophysical survey and small scale excavation over the last eight years. These investigations, although not fully published as yet, have revealed evidence of Late Iron Age/ early Roman

activity in the form of ditches, an enclosure and a horseshoe shaped feature, all possibly associated with a Late Iron Age/ early Roman farmstead (Lockyear 2013; 2015).

- 2.2.5 A series of Prehistoric pits and an Anglo-Saxon hill-top cremation cemetery with a possible mortuary structure were excavated at Station Road, Watton-at-Stone, c. 500m north-west of the site (Boyer *et al* 2015, Chapter 11)

### **2.3 Previous investigations within the site**

- 2.3.1 An archaeological evaluation of the site comprised the excavation of two trenches each measuring 10m x 1.80m (HHER 15573). Trench 2 contained no archaeological features; Trench 1 revealed an east-west ditch 1.2m wide and 0.30m deep. The backfill contained two sherds of Roman pottery. This ditch was interpreted as the southern of the parallel ditches identified on aerial photography and the dates of the pottery were interpreted as evidence that the ditches flanked a Roman road or trackway. No evidence of road metalling was recorded, but an unabraded sherd of 2nd-century AD Samian ware was recovered from topsoil (Robertson 2007).



### **3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Fieldwork Methodology**

- 3.1.1 A Risk Assessment and Method Statement (RAMS) were prepared prior to commencement of the work. A site code (WASH16) was obtained and was used as the unique site identifier for all records.
- 3.1.2 Archaeological monitoring took place on the topsoil strip and all ground reduction associated with the installation of the tennis court, new fencing and lighting within the site area.
- 3.1.3 All machine excavation was generally undertaken using a suitable back-acting mechanical excavator provided by the client or their contractor. The machine excavation involved the removal of the topsoil and the subsequent ground reduction across the site to c. 62m OD.
- 3.1.4 Where practicable and safe to do so, exposed archaeological remains were excavated by hand.
- 3.1.5 The extent of the site was picked up using GPS; the archaeological features observed were planned by hand, and the drawings have been digitised for inclusion in this report. Sections were drawn at scales of 1:10 or 1:20 (as appropriate) on drawing film. Written records were made on *pro forma* watching brief and context record sheets, as appropriate.
- 3.1.6 A photographic record was made, consisting of high-resolution digital (JPEG) images.
- 3.1.7 All finds were collected, bagged by context and labelled with the site code and context number.
- 3.1.8 Selected deposits were sampled for environmental analysis.

#### **3.3 The Site Archive**

- 3.3.1 The site archive is currently held at the offices of ASE and will be deposited at the Hertford Museum in due course. The contents of the archive are tabulated below.

Context sheets	5
Section sheets	1
Plans sheets	2
Colour photographs	0
B&W photos	0
Digital photos	60
Context register	0
Drawing register	0
Watching brief forms	4
Trench Record forms	0

Table 1: Quantification of site paper archive

Bulk finds (quantity e.g. 1 bag, 1 box, 0.5 box 0.5 of a box )	1 box
Registered finds (number of)	0
Flots and environmental remains from bulk samples	2
Palaeoenvironmental specialists sample samples (e.g. columns, prepared slides)	0
Waterlogged wood	0
Wet sieved environmental remains from bulk samples	0

Table 2: Quantification of artefact and environmental samples

3.3.2 The finds and environmental samples ultimately deposited as part of the archive are dependent on specialist recommendations and regional archive requirements.

## 4.0 RESULTS

### 4.1 General

4.1.1 The works monitored included the ground reduction of the new tennis court area (Fig. 2) This consisted of a rectangular area measuring 32.25m east-west by 18.45m north-south. The original ground sloped markedly from 63.85m OD in the west down to 62.23m OD in the east, and the whole area was reduced down to 62.03m OD.

4.1.2 The western half of the site was reduced in substantial spits by the groundworks contractor (Figs 3 and 4). It was not always easy to observe the site strip in plan during these works and archaeological features were consequently partly identified in plan and partly in section only.

Context	Type	Description	Max. Length m	Max. Width m	Deposit Thickness m	Height (m OD)
101	Layer	Topsoil	32.25m	18.45m	0.20m	63.85-62.23m
102	Layer	Subsoil	32.25m	18.45m	0.20-0.40m	63.45-62.03m
103	Fill	2nd fill of [105]	0.80m	0.50m	0.25m	62.92m
104	Fill	1st fill of [105]	0.80m	0.50m	0.15m	62.67m
105	Cut	Hearth	0.80m	0.50m	0.40m	62.92m
106	Fill	Fill of [107]	14m	2m	0.30-0.80m	63.25m
107	Cut	Ditch	14m	2m	0.30-0.80m	63.25m
108	Deposit	Natural	32.25m	18.45m	NFE	63.25-62.92m

Table 3: list of recorded contexts

### 4.2 Monitoring of groundworks

4.2.1 Natural clay and gravel [108] was observed at 63.25m OD to the west, sloping down to 62.92m OD to the east. Due to the sloping nature of the deposits, and the formation level of 62.03m OD, natural deposits were not observed within the eastern-most c.8m of the site.

4.2.2 Cut into natural deposit [108] was oval hearth [105] (Figs 2 and 5). Measuring 0.80m by 0.50m, the hearth was filled by a dark brown-black primary fill with frequent charcoal [104]. Sealing primary fill [104] was secondary fill [103], a dark brown clay with occasional flint and burnt bone, and three pieces of Late Iron Age/early Roman pottery.

4.2.3 Also cut into the natural deposits was ditch [107], orientated east-west down the slope of the hill (Figs 2 and 6). The ditch measured 2m wide and 0.80m deep at the western-most end of the site, and 1.2m wide and 0.30m deep 14m to the east within the centre of the monitored area. The ditch was not observed further to the east, and it is likely that the shallow depth coupled with the slope means little more of the ditch survived to the east. The ditch was filled with a firm, mid-brown silty deposit [106] with occasional charcoal flecks, stone and pottery. The pottery was all located within the top c. 0.40m of the fill, and dates broadly to the late 2nd – mid 3rd century.

- 4.2.4 Both features were sealed by c. 0.40m of mid-brown clayish-silt subsoil [102] with frequent stone and pebble and occasional CBM with an early/mid post-medieval date. The whole area was sealed by 0.20m of topsoil and grass, sloping from 63.85m OD in the west down to 62.23m OD in the east.
- 4.2.5 Ditch [107] is clearly the continuation of Roman ditch [001] encountered in Trench 1 during the preceding evaluation (Fig. 2).

## 5.0 THE FINDS

### 5.1 Summary

- 5.1.1 A small assemblage of pottery and ceramic building material was hand-collected from two contexts during the watching brief. All hand-collected finds were washed and air dried and subsequently quantified by count and weight and bagged by material and context (Table 4). A small amount of fired clay and hammerstone was also retrieved from two environmental samples (quantified in Table 6). All finds have been packed and stored following ClfA guidelines (2014).

Context	Pottery	Weight (g)	CBM	Weight (g)	Bone	Weight (g)
102			6	316		
103	3	24			1	6
106	61	2802				
<i>Total</i>	<i>64</i>	<i>2826</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>316</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>6</i>

Table 4: Finds quantification

### 5.2 The Roman Pottery Isa Benedetti-Whitton

- 5.2.1 A small but well preserved assemblage of 71 sherds of Roman pottery weighing 3800g was recovered primarily from a single context, [106], although a small quantity of potentially earlier, LIA/Roman sherds were also collected from [103]. The pottery was examined with a x20 binocular microscope and quantified by fabric, sherd count, weight, estimated vessel number and estimated vessel equivalent on pro forma records and in an Excel spreadsheet.
- 5.2.2 In the absence of a Hertfordshire-specific type series the pottery has been recorded using fabric and form codes from the Essex regional type-series, incorporating mnemonic fabric codes developed during recording of material from Elms Farm, Heybridge (Biddulph et al 2015) and form codes devised by Going (1987) for sites in Chelmsford. All the pottery has been retained as part of the site archive; sherd count and weight by fabric are shown in Table 5.

Fabric	Fabric description	Sherd quantity	Sherd weight (g)
ABAET	Baetican amphorae	26	2846
GRS	Sandy grey wares	31	810
HAWOM	Hadham white-slipped oxidised ware	1	2
CGRHN	Central Gaulish Rhenish ware	1	13
OXMN	Oxfordshire white ware mortaria	5	87
GROG	Grog-tempered wares, unsourced	3	24
CGSW	Central Gaulish Samian wares	2	4
BUFF	Buff wares, unsourced	2	14

Table 5. Comparative quantities and weight of pottery sherds by fabric

- 5.2.3 Sherds of at least one Baetican amphora (ABAET) account for most of the weight. These were large pieces suggesting primary deposition, although as this type of amphorae have a long use period from the 1st to the 3rd century AD they are not particularly dateable. However, a piece of HAWOM can be dated from the early 2nd to 3rd century, a date range supported by sherds of CGSW and a base fragment of a ?beaker in CGRHN that both date from the late 2nd-mid 3rd century. A mortarium rim fragment in OXMN dates to AD240 or later, dating the infilling of the ditch to c.AD240-50 or later.
- 5.2.4 A large amount of the pottery from [106] was made up of sherds of unsourced grey sandy ware (GRS). Rim fragments indicate the original forms of these vessels may have included at least one necked jar (G20) and some dishes (B-type vessels). There were also two fragments in different unsourced buff fabrics, one of which was a rim fragment from a reeded rimmed vessel, most probably a jar. Neither the GRS or BUFF fragments can be well-dated.
- 5.2.5 Three sherds of grog-tempered ware were found in [103]. These fragments most likely represent earlier material, dating to the LIA/early Roman period.

### **5.3 Ceramic Building Material (CBM) by Isa Benedetti-Whitton**

- 5.3.1 A very small assemblage of only five pieces of ceramic building material (CBM) and weighing 313g was collected from context [102]. All the material was quantified by form, weight and fabric and recorded on standard recording forms. This information was then entered into a digital Excel database. Fabric descriptions were developed with the aid of a x20 binocular microscope and use the following conventions: frequency of inclusions as sparse, moderate, common or abundant; the size of inclusions as fine (up to 0.25mm), medium (up to 0.25 and 0.5mm), coarse (0.5-1.0mm) and very coarse (larger than 1.0mm). Fabric samples and items of interest have been retained.
- 5.3.2 Most of the assemblage was comprised of peg tile, some of which was in very poor condition although two well-preserved fragments were also present. All the tile was made from the same red fabric with varying quantities (moderate-common) of medium-coarse quartz, and sparse very coarse quartz. An early-mid post-medieval date is suggested for the tile, although peg tile varies little in form from the 14th-18th centuries.
- 5.3.3 A single piece of brick was also present. Only one original surface was intact and the other surfaces heavily abraded. The fabric was fine and micaceous with sparse quartz and not particularly hard fired. Fabrics of this type tend to date to the early post-medieval/Tudor period.

### **5.4 The Fired Clay by Isa Benedetti-Whitton**

- 5.4.1 Thirty-eight very fragmentary crumbs of fired clay weighing 24g were retrieved during the environmental processing of sample <1> from context [104]. None were diagnostic beyond the fact that they had been burnt, with several being reduced and blackened. The clay has been retained in the short term but does not require long-term curation.

## **5.5 The Metallurgical Remains** by Elena Baldi

- 5.5.1 Very small amounts of magnetic material were recovered from the residues of samples <1> and <2>, collected respectively from contexts [104] and [106], from <2 and 2-4 mm sieves, totalling to c. 4.5 grams in weight.
- 5.5.2 The material was recovered virtually exclusively with the aid of a magnet. The material from context [104] consists of 23 magnetic fragments measuring 2-6mm, whilst the fragments from the <2 sieve account for 200+ pieces. The material from context [106] consists of 35+ magnetic fragments measuring 2-6mm, whilst the fragments from the <2 sieve account for 100+ pieces. All fragments can be described as hammerscale, which is likely to have been created by the smithing process.
- 5.5.3 Sample <2> was collected from context [106], which contained Roman pottery, and it is likely that the hammerscale is contemporary with it. However, such small quantities are undiagnostic and insufficient to identify intensive smithing activity at the site.

## **6.0 THE ENVIRONMENTAL SAMPLES** by Stacey Adams

### **6.1 Introduction**

- 6.1.1 Two bulk samples were taken during excavations at the Recreational Grounds at Watton-at-Stone from a Roman hearth [104] and ditch [106] for the recovery of environmental material, including charred plant macrofossils, wood charcoal, fauna and Mollusca, as well as to assist finds recovery. The following report summarises the charred plant material recovered from the samples to assess its preservation and the potential for the recovery of further archaeobotanical material from the site.

### **6.2 Methodology**

- 6.2.1 The bulk samples, from 10 to 40L in volume, were processed by mechanical flotation, in their entirety, with a 500µm mesh for the residues and a 250µm for the retention of the flot. The heavy residues were passed through graded sieves of 8, 4 and 2mm and each fraction sorted for environmental and artefactual remains (Table 6). Artefacts recovered from the samples were distributed to specialists, and are incorporated in the relevant sections of this volume where they add further information to the existing finds assemblage. The flots were scanned under a stereozoom microscope at 7-45x magnifications and their contents recorded (Table 7). Nomenclature for cereals follows Zohary and Hopf (1994).

### **6.3 Results**

*Samples <1> [104] and <2> [106].*

- 6.3.1 The flots varied from 5 to 25ml in volume and consisted of 1 to 90% modern roots. Wood charcoal fragments were present in both flots although not in significant quantities for evaluation. A single charred oat (*Avena* sp.) grain from the ditch [106] was the only other plant material within the flots.

### **6.4 Discussion**

- 6.4.1 The environmental remains from this site indicate the potential for further recovery of charred plant material if secure deposits are systematically sampled where encountered in future. The absence of recent seeds, burrowing molluscs (*Ceciloides*) and modern insects provides evidence that the features are relatively secure and that intrusive and residual material will be limited.



Sample Number	Context	Context / deposit type	Sample Volume (litres)	Charcoal >4mm	Weight (g)	Charcoal <4mm	Weight (g)	Other (quantity/ weight)
1	104	Hearth	10			**	<1	Fired Clay (***/22g) FCF (**/ 21g) Mag.Mat. >2mm (* / <1g) Mag.Mat. <2mm (***/ 1g)
2	106	Ditch	40	*	<1	**	<1	FCF (* / 3g) Mag.Mat. >2mm (**/ 1g) Mag.Mat. <2mm (***/ <1g)

Table 6: Environmental sample residue quantification  
(\* = 1-10, \*\* = 11-50, \*\*\* = 51-250)

Sample Number	Context	Weight g	Flot volume ml	Uncharred %	Charcoal >4mm	Charcoal <4mm	Charcoal <2mm	Crop seeds charred	Identifications	Preservation
1	104	8	25	1	**	***	****			
2	106	2	5	90		*	**	*	<i>Avena</i> sp.	(+)

Table 7: Environmental sample flot quantification  
(\* = 1-10, \*\* = 11-50, \*\*\* = 51-250, \*\*\*\* = >250) (+ = poor, ++ = moderate, +++ = good).

## **7.0 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS**

### **7.1 Overview of stratigraphic sequence**

- 7.1.1 The stratigraphic sequence consisted of natural clay and gravel, which sloped from 63.25m OD to the west down to 62.92m OD to the east. Cut into the natural was a hearth dating to the LIA-early Roman period and a linear ditch which went out of use in the late 2nd – mid 3rd century AD. Sealing these features was c.0.40m of mid-brown clayish-silt subsoil with early/mid post-medieval CBM inclusions. The sequence was sealed by 0.20m of topsoil and grass, located at 63.85m OD sloping east to 62.23m OD.

### **7.2 Consideration of research aims**

- *The general aim of the archaeological monitoring was to identify the presence of any archaeological remains during the topsoil strip and groundworks associated with the installation of the tennis courts, new fencing and lighting columns and associated service trenches, and to investigate and record them prior to their potential disturbance/destruction by the development.*

Archaeological features in the form of a hearth of LIA/early Roman date and a linear ditch of late 2nd – mid 3rd century AD were observed during the ground reduction.

- *Determine the extent of the ditch revealed in the evaluation, whether a parallel ditch survives within the site and, if so, whether the ditches bound a road or trackway, possibly of Roman date.*

The ditch was observed extending out of the western section for a distance of c. 3m. Together with that part of it recorded within evaluation Trench 1 it can be determined that the ditch extended for at least 15m to the east before petering out, presumably eroded away by the current slope of the ground. No parallel ditch was observed, and no evidence of a metalled road or surface was observed.

- *Roman infrastructure is identified as a future regional research topic in Research and Archaeology Revisited: a revised framework for the East of England (Medlycott 2011), where it is stressed that more information is needed not only on location of roads and trackways, but also variations in structure. The monitoring has the potential to address these points.*

Although a substantial ditch was observed within this watching brief, no evidence of a parallel ditch or road surface was observed, thus meaning it is not possible at this time to identify this ditch as associated with a road or trackway.

- *In the event that significant discoveries are made the resulting report will seek to address pertinent research objectives identified in Research and Archaeology: a framework for the Eastern Counties, 2. Research agenda and*

*strategy (Brown and Glazebrook 2000) and Research and Archaeology Revisited: a revised framework for the East of England (Medlycott 2011).*

The inability at this time to interpret the use and function of the ditch means it is not possible to allocate further research questions or objectives to the findings of this watching brief.

### **7.3 Conclusions**

- 7.3.1 The archaeological monitoring revealed the presence of a small amount of activity on the site in the form of a Late Iron Age/early Roman hearth and an east-west linear ditch which went out of use in the late 2nd – mid 3rd century AD, cut into the natural deposits, and sealed by post-medieval subsoil and modern topsoil.
- 7.3.2 The ditch observed during the watching brief has been identified as the same one recorded during the evaluation carried out in 2007. No second, parallel ditch or associated road surface was observed during the watching brief. It is perhaps likely that it was a boundary feature associated with the apparent Later Roman building remains found at Glebe House to the north-east.

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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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## HERTFORDSHIRE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT RECORD SUMMARY SHEET

Site name and address: <b>New Tennis Court site</b> <b>Recreation Ground, School Lane, Watton-at-Stone, Hertfordshire, SG14 3SF</b>		
County: Hertfordshire		District: East Hertfordshire
Village/Town: Watton-at-Stone		Parish: Watton-at-Stone
Planning application reference: 3/13/2016/FP		
HER Enquiry reference:		
Funding source: Client		
Nature of application: Archaeological Condition on planning consent		
Present land use: open field		
Size of application area:		Size of area investigated:
NGR (to 8 figures minimum): TL 30187 19055		
Site code (if applicable): WASH16		
Site director/Organization: Sarah Ritchie, Archaeology South-East		
Type of work: archaeological watching brief		
Date of work:	Start: 03/10/2016	Finish: 07/10/2016
Location of finds & site archive/Curating museum: Hertford Museum		
Related HER Nos: 15573		Periods represented: Roman
Relevant previous summaries/reports  Robertson, A. 2007, <i>Tennis Court, Recreation Ground, School Lane, Watton-at Stone, Hertfordshire. Archaeological Evaluation by Trial Trenching</i> , ECC Field Archaeology Unit rep. 1712		
Summary of fieldwork results: <i>Monitoring was undertaken during groundworks for the construction of a new tennis court. The site was previously evaluated in 2007.</i>  <i>Cut into the clay and gravel natural was a hearth dating to the LIA-early Roman period and a linear ditch which went out of use in the late 2nd – mid 3rd century AD. The ditch was established to be the continuation of that found by the evaluation. Sealing these features was c.0.40m of mid-brown clayish-silt subsoil with early/mid post-medieval CBM inclusions. The sequence was overlain by 0.20m of topsoil and grass, the ground surface being at 63.85m – 62.23m OD.</i>		
Author of summary: S. Ritchie		Date of summary:

## OASIS Form

**OASIS ID: archaeol6-268740**

### Project details

Project name	Archaeological Monitoring at Recreation Ground, School Lane, Watton-at-Stone, Hertfordshire, SG14 3SF
Short description of the project	The monitoring revealed a sequence of natural clay and gravel, which sloped from 63.25m OD to the west down to 62.92m OD to the east. Cut into the natural was a hearth dating to the LIA-early Roman period and a linear ditch which went out of use in the late 2nd - mid 3rd century AD. Sealing these features was c.0.40m of mid-brown clayish-silt subsoil with early/mid post-medieval CBM inclusions. The sequence was sealed by 0.20m of topsoil and grass, located at 63.85m OD sloping east to 62.23m OD.
Project dates	Start: 03-10-2016 End: 07-10-2016
Previous/future work	Yes / No
Associated project reference codes	WASH16 - Sitecode
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	Area of Archaeological Importance (AAI)
Current Land use	Grassland Heathland 2 - Undisturbed Grassland
Monument type	DITCH Roman
Monument type	HEARTH Late Iron Age
Significant Finds	POT Late Iron Age
Significant Finds	POT Roman
Significant Finds	CBM Post Medieval
Investigation type	"Watching Brief"
Prompt	Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPS

### Project location

Country	England
Site location	HERTFORDSHIRE EAST HERTFORDSHIRE WATTON AT STONE Recreation Ground, School Lane,
Postcode	SG14 3SF
Study area	0.74 Hectares
Site coordinates	TL 30187 19055 51.854423415654 -0.109489146919 51 51 15 N 000 06 34 W Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 62.23m Max: 63.85m

### Project creators

Name of Organisation	Archaeology South-East
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Project brief originator	Watton-at-Stone Parish Council
Project design originator	Watton-at-Stone Parish Council
Project director/manager	Niall Oakey
Project supervisor	Sarah Ritchie
Type of sponsor/funding body	Client
Name of sponsor/funding body	Watton-at-Stone Parish Council

#### **Project archives**

Physical Archive ID	WASH16
Digital Archive ID	WASH16
Paper Archive ID	WASH16

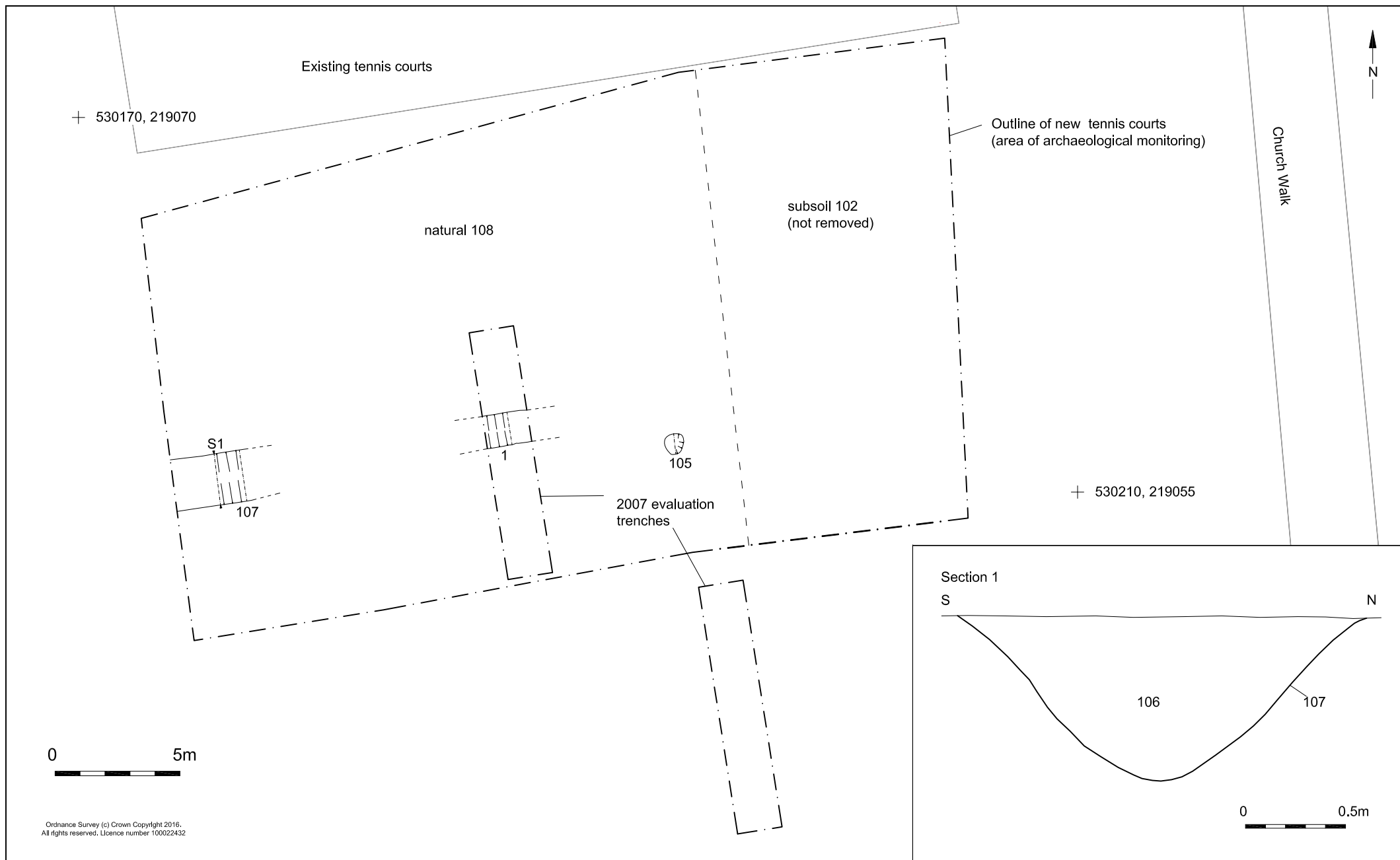
#### **Project bibliography 1**

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Archaeological Monitoring at Recreation Ground, School Lane, Watton-at-Stone, Hertfordshire, SG14 3SF
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Ritchie, S.
Date	2016
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Entered by	Sarah Ritchie (s.ritchie@ucl.ac.uk)
Entered on	15 November 2016





© Archaeology South-East		Recreation Ground, School Lane, Watton-at-Stone	Fig. 1
Project Ref: 8088	May 2017	Site location	
Report No: 2016445	Drawn by: APL		



© <b>Archaeology South-East</b>		Recreation Ground, School Lane, Watton-at-Stone	Fig.2
Project Ref: 8088	Nov 2016	Location of archaeological monitoring with features and sections	
Report Ref: 2016445	Drawn by: APL		



Fig. 3. General view of the site



Fig. 4. View of the site under excavation





Fig. 5. Hearth 105 looking south, 0.4m scale



Fig. 6. Ditch 107 section looking west, 0.4m scale



Fig.7. General view of the site during tennis court construction

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