

An Archaeological Watching Brief at Spires Academy, Sturry, Kent

NGR 619710 161700

Site Code: SAC 10

Project No. 4577

OASIS No. archaeol6-85802

By

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Abstract

An archaeological watching brief was maintained during the excavation of geotechnical test pits at Spires Academy, Sturry (NGR 619710 161700). The work was undertaken in October 2010 and was commissioned by Carillion.

The watching brief identified two archaeological features both containing single finds of Roman date. These are potentially Roman cut features indicating some form of road side activity. However, equally the finds could be residual and the features may be of a later date.

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Site Background

1.1.1 Archaeology South-East (ASE), a division of University College London Centre for Applied Archaeology (UCLCAA), was commissioned by Carillion to undertake an archaeological watching brief on the excavation of 14 geotechnical interventions at Spires Academy, Sturry, Kent (NGR 619710 161700), henceforth called the site (Figures 1 and 2).

1.2 Topography and Geology

1.2.1 The site lay in a plot of land to the east of the school buildings currently in use as a pasture. It was bounded to the south by Island Road and to the north and east by open fields.

1.2.2 The geology of the site is Head brickearth and gravel over London clay (BGS Map 273, 1974).

1.3 Planning Background

1.3.1 The ground works were undertaken in advance of a planning application to develop the site for a new school building. The site lies within an area of some archaeological potential. Therefore, a programme of archaeological works was commissioned by Carillion as best practice to observe these ground works.

1.3.2 The fieldwork was undertaken by Giles Dawkes and Greg Priestly-Bell (Senior Archaeologists). The project was managed by Andy Leonard (Project Manager) and Jim Stevenson (Post-excavation Manager).

2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Summary

- 2.1.1 A Late Iron Age / Early Roman enclosure has been identified some 350m to the east of the site
- 2.1.2 The site lies to the north of a Roman Road. This is the route of Island Road, immediately to the south of the site.
- 2.1.3 A Saxon cemetery is known some 250m to the south-east and the village of Westbere to the south was the focus for Saxon and later settlement (Rady 2006; Barrett 2006).

3.0 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Aims

3.1.1 The general aim of the archaeological work was to ensure that any artefacts or ecofacts of an archaeological interest encountered during the ground works were located and recorded to appropriate standards. Specifically, the main aims of the archaeological works was to establish the location, extent and date of any ground disturbance present and to ascertain at what depth any archaeological or potential archaeological horizons were encountered.

3.2 Fieldwork methodology

3.2.1 The 14 geotechnical interventions were undertaken by mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless bucket. The interventions were all 0.9m wide, 2.5m long and excavated to a depth of up to 3m. All test pits were monitored by an archaeologist.

4.0 RESULTS (Figs 2 and 3)

4.1 SAT01

Number	Type	Description	Max. Length	Max. Width	Max. Thickness
SAT01/1	Layer	Topsoil	Tr.	Tr.	0.37m
SAT01/2	Deposit	Natural	Tr.	Tr.	N/A

The natural was orange brown clay and gravel. No archaeological features or finds were identified.

4.2 SAT02

Number	Type	Description	Max. Length	Max. Width	Max. Thickness
SAT02/1	Layer	Topsoil	Tr.	Tr.	0.4m
SAT02/2	Deposit	Natural	Tr.	Tr.	N/A

The natural was orange brown clay and gravel. No archaeological features or finds were identified.

4.3 SAT03

Number	Type	Description	Max. Length	Max. Width	Max. Thickness
SAT03/1	Layer	Topsoil	Tr.	Tr.	0.4m
SAT03/2	Fill	Feature fill	Tr.	1m	0.3m
SAT03/3	Cut	Negative Feature	Tr.	1m	0.3m
SAT03/4	Deposit	Natural	Tr.	Tr.	N/A

The north side of a negative feature was recorded in section (Fig. 3 section 2). Feature (SAT03/3) may have been a pit or ditch with steep concave sides and a flat base. Fill (SAT03/2) was firm grey silt and gravel with a find of a single fragment of abraded Roman ceramic building material.

The natural was orange brown clay and gravel.

4.4 SAT04

Number	Type	Description	Max. Length	Max. Width	Max. Thickness
SAT04/1	Layer	Topsoil	Tr.	Tr.	0.41m
SAT04/2	Deposit	Natural	Tr.	Tr.	N/A

The natural was orange brown clay and gravel. No archaeological features or finds were identified.

4.5 SAT05

Number	Type	Description	Max. Length	Max. Width	Max. Thickness
SAT05/1	Layer	Topsoil	Tr.	Tr.	0.4m
SAT05/2	Deposit	Natural	Tr.	Tr.	N/A

The natural was orange brown clay and gravel. No archaeological features or finds were identified.

4.6 CBR01

Number	Type	Description	Max. Length	Max. Width	Max. Thickness
CBR01/1	Layer	Topsoil	Tr.	Tr.	0.25m
CBR01/2	Deposit	Natural	Tr.	Tr.	N/A

The natural was orange brown clay and gravel. No archaeological features or finds were identified.

4.7 CBR02

Number	Type	Description	Max. Length	Max. Width	Max. Thickness
CBR02/1	Layer	Topsoil	Tr.	Tr.	0.25m
CBR02/2	Deposit	Natural	Tr.	Tr.	N/A

The natural was orange brown clay and gravel. No archaeological features or finds were identified.

4.8 CBR03

Number	Type	Description	Max. Length	Max. Width	Max. Thickness
CBR03/1	Layer	Topsoil	Tr.	Tr.	0.25m
CBR03/2	Deposit	Natural	Tr.	Tr.	N/A

The natural was orange brown clay and gravel. No archaeological features or finds were identified.

4.9 CBR04

Number	Type	Description	Max. Length	Max. Width	Max. Thickness
CBR04/1	Layer	Topsoil	Tr.	Tr.	0.25m
CBR04/2	Deposit	Natural	Tr.	Tr.	N/A

The natural was orange brown clay and gravel. No archaeological features or finds were identified.

4.10 CBR05

Number	Type	Description	Max. Length	Max. Width	Max. Thickness
CBR05/1	Layer	Topsoil	Tr.	Tr.	0.25m
CBR05/2	Deposit	Natural	Tr.	Tr.	N/A

The natural was orange brown clay and gravel. No archaeological features or finds were identified.

4.11 TP01

Number	Type	Description	Max. Length	Max. Width	Max. Thickness
TP01/1	Layer	Topsoil	Tr.	Tr.	0.4m
TP01/2	Deposit	Natural	Tr.	Tr.	N/A

The natural was orange brown clay and gravel. No archaeological features or finds were identified.

4.12 TP02

Number	Type	Description	Max. Length	Max. Width	Max. Thickness
TP02/1	Layer	Topsoil	Tr.	Tr.	0.3m
TP02/2	Fill	Feature fill	Tr.	0.3m	0.4m
TP02/3	Cut	Negative feature	Tr.	0.3m	0.4m
TP02/4	Deposit	Natural	Tr.	Tr.	N/A

The east side of a negative feature was recorded in section (Fig. 2, Section 1). Feature (TP02/3) may have been a pit or ditch and had a steep concave side. The base was not seen. Fill (TP02/2) was firm grey silt and gravel with a find of a single fragment of Roman brick.

The natural was orange brown clay and gravel.

4.13 TP03

Number	Type	Description	Max. Length	Max. Width	Max. Thickness
TP03/1	Layer	Topsoil	Tr.	Tr.	0.42m
TP03/2	Deposit	Natural	Tr.	Tr.	N/A

The natural was orange brown clay and gravel. No archaeological features or finds were identified.

4.14 TP04

Number	Type	Description	Max. Length	Max. Width	Max. Thickness
TP04/1	Layer	Topsoil	Tr.	Tr.	0.25m
TP04/2	Deposit	Natural	Tr.	Tr.	N/A

The natural was orange brown clay and gravel. No archaeological features or finds were identified.

5.0 THE FINDS by Sarah Porteus

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 The finds have been weighed and quantified and recorded on pro forma recording forms and retained as part of the archive.

5.2 The ceramic building material

5.2.1 Fragments of ceramic building material (CBM) were recovered from two contexts. A single fragment of Roman brick (1/356g) in an under-fired fine sandy orange fabric with fine micaceous speckling and sparse cream silt streaks was recovered from context (TP02/02). The brick fragment had a thickness of 37mm and showed signs of having been heat affected on part of the upper surface. A second fragment of CBM (1/14g) recovered from context [SAT03/02] is in the same fabric as the brick and so of probable Roman date, it is however too abraded for form to be identified.

5.2.2 The assemblage holds no further potential for research but has been retained for comparison should further work be undertaken.

6.0 CONCLUSION

- 6.1** The watching brief identified two negative features both containing single finds of Roman date. These are potentially Roman cut feature, perhaps indicating some form of road side activity. However, the finds could be residual, which would not be surprising given the location of the site and the features of later date.

Bibliography

Barret, D., 2006 *Island Road, Hersden, Canterbury's Archaeology* 29, 19-20

Rady, J., 2006, *Sewer Pipelines South of Island Road, Hersden, Canterbury's Archaeology* 29, 20-22

Appendix 1

OASIS ID: archaeol6-85802

Project details

Project name	Spires Academy
Short description of the project	An archaeological watching brief was maintained during the excavation of geotechnical test pits at Spires Academy, Sturry (NGR TQ 1971 6170). The work was undertaken in October 2010 and was commissioned by Carillion. The watching brief identified two negative features both containing single finds of Roman date. These are potentially Roman cut features indicating some form of road side activity. However, the finds could be residual and the features may well be of a later date.
Project dates	Start: 11-10-2010 End: 14-10-2010
Previous/future work	Yes / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	4577 - Contracting Unit No.
Any associated project reference codes	SAC10 - Sitecode
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	None
Current Land use	Grassland Heathland 2 - Undisturbed Grassland
Monument type	PIT Roman
Significant Finds	CBM Roman
Investigation type	'Watching Brief'
Prompt	Voluntary/self-interest
Project location	
Country	England
Site location	KENT CANTERBURY STURRY Spires Academy, Sturry
Postcode	CT2 0NG
Study area	1.50 Hectares
Site coordinates	TQ 1971 6172 51.3414325446 -0.281123940142 51 20 29 N 000 16 52 W Point
Project creators	
Name of Organisation	Archaeology South-East
Project brief originator	Private Client
Project design	Archaeology South-East

originator

Project director/manager Andy Leonard

Project supervisor Giles Dawkes

Type of sponsor/funding body private client

Project archives

Physical Archive recipient Local Museum

Physical Contents 'Ceramics'

Digital Archive recipient Local Museum

Digital Contents 'Ceramics'

Digital Media available 'Database','Spreadsheets','Text'

Paper Archive recipient Local Museum

Paper Media available 'Context sheet','Drawing','Notebook - Excavation','Research',' General Notes','Photograph','Plan','Report','Section'

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