



**CROWN WOODS SCHOOL
(Phase 2)
Riefield Road
London SE9**

London Borough of Greenwich

Watching brief report

October 2011



Summary (non-technical)

This report has been commissioned by Balfour Beatty Construction Ltd in order to record and assess the results of the second phase of the watching brief carried out at Crown Woods School, Eltham. The first phase was reported on in 2009 (Howell, 2009).

Groundworks in preparation for the construction of new sports pitches were monitored intermittently between the 9th August and the 12th October 2011 in the area of the former school buildings.

The watching brief found the site had been mostly disturbed by the construction of the former school buildings and surrounding landscaping. In general, the site had been terraced so that the southern half of the site was a raised platform and the northern half was truncated. As a result, no finds or features of archaeological significance have been observed.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Site background

The watching brief took place at Crown Woods School, Eltham; hereafter called 'the site'. The site covers an area of approximately 86,500m², which is bound to the east by the gardens of houses along Riefield Road, to the south by the A210 (Bexley Road), to the west by a Nature Study Centre and to the north by Eltham Warren Golf Course (see Fig 1). The former school buildings were on the northern part of the site and the remainder of the site is now occupied by the new school buildings. The National Grid Reference (NGR) for the centre of the site is 544300 174800. The site lies on a south-facing slope, between 57m OD and 69m OD, as indicated by spot-heights on Bexley Road to the south and on Riefield Road to the north-east. The site code is RIF09.

A chapter in an *Environmental Statement* was previously prepared by MoLAS (now MOL Archaeology), which covers the whole area of the site (URS 2007, chapter 9). This document should be referred to for information on the natural geology, archaeological and historical background of the site, and the initial assessment of its archaeological potential. This document informed the design of a *Written scheme of investigation* prepared by Ove Arup and Partners Limited (Ove Arup 2008). In response, a *Method Statement for an archaeological watching brief* was prepared (MOL Archaeology 2009).

Groundworks in preparation for the construction of new buildings, to replace the existing school buildings, were monitored between the 6th July and the 7th August 2009 in the area of the former school playing fields (Howell 2009). These works formed the first phase of the watching brief. They indicated a low level of archaeological remains on the site. There were no structural or cut features or deposits indicating occupation on the site. Finds consisted of burnt and struck flint, including nine medium to high quality pieces of waste flint and a hollow end scraper of probable Neolithic/Bronze Age date. One concentration, of small and abraded sherds of medieval pottery, from local coarseware jars or cooking pots, suggest some kind of domestic activity in the vicinity between the mid 13th and 14th centuries, possibly continuing as late as the 15th to 16th centuries. All other finds could possibly be the result of manuring for agricultural purposes (i.e. brought from elsewhere).

This report covers the second phase of the watching brief during the groundworks in preparation for the construction of new sports pitches. These works were monitored intermittently between the 9th August and the 12th October 2011 in the area of the former school buildings.

1.2 The planning and legislative framework

The legislative and planning framework in which the archaeological exercise took place was summarised in the *Environmental statement*.

1.3 Planning background

The watching brief was undertaken in accordance with a condition placed on the planning consent (London Borough of Greenwich, ref 08/2379F condition 32 (Archaeology), dated 19th December 2008).

1.4 Origin and scope of the report

This report was commissioned by Balfour Beatty Construction Ltd and produced by the Museum of London Archaeology (MOL Archaeology). The report has been prepared within the terms of the relevant Standard specified by the Institute for Archaeologists (IFA 2001).

The purpose of the watching brief was to determine whether archaeological remains or features were present on the site and, if so, to record the nature and extent of such remains. A number of more site-specific research aims and objectives were established in the preceding *Method Statement*, and are outlined in the following section.

The purpose of the present report is to analyse the results of the investigation against the original research aims, and to suggest what further work, including analysis or publication (if any), should now take place.

1.5 Aims and objectives

The following research aims and objectives were established in the *Method Statement* for the watching brief (Section 2.2):

- To determine the presence/absence, extent, condition, character, quality and date of any archaeological remains;
- To determine the local, regional and national importance of such remains, and the potential for further fieldwork to fulfil local, regional and national research objectives;
- To determine the extent and nature of any prehistoric occupation in the study area;
- To determine the extent and nature of any Post Medieval agricultural land use in the study area;
- To clarify the level of previous truncation across the site.

All research is undertaken within the priorities established in the Museum of London's *A research framework for London Archaeology, 2002*.

2 Topographical and historical background

A detailed description of the geology, archaeology and history of the site was included in the *Environmental Statement*.

To summarise, the site was adjudged to have a low potential for archaeological remains of the prehistoric to early medieval periods, with a low-moderate potential for medieval and a moderate potential for post-medieval remains related to agricultural usage and landscaping of the site in both periods. Features cut into contemporary ground surface such as field ditches, drains and pits were considered to potentially survive. In addition, background research for this report found that there was extensive gravel extraction works to the west of the site in the mid 19th-century, although their precise location and extent are not known.

3 The watching brief

3.1 Methodology

All archaeological investigation and recording during the watching brief was carried out in accordance with the *Written scheme of investigation* (Ove Arup 2008), the *Method statement* (MOL Archaeology 2009) and the *Archaeological Site Manual* (MoLAS 1994).

The reduction to formation levels on each of the designated areas (see Fig 2) was undertaken by contractors under MOL Archaeology supervision. The locations of the areas of excavation were recorded by MOL Archaeology and plotted on to a Survey (Drg ref S11-225-P008, White Horse contractors). The heights of observations were recorded relative to the contractor's survey.

This phase of the watching brief has produced an additional 12 site diary entries, 8 photographs and 1 plan annotated to record site works. No contexts numbers were allocated, as no archaeological deposits or features were encountered. These records have been integrated with the existing site archive under the site code RIF09 in the MoL archive.

3.2 Results of the watching brief

The watching brief covered the area of the former school buildings and the observations are divided according to the areas of new development (see Fig 2).

3.2.1 Artificial turf pitch

The artificial turf pitch was located to the west, partially under the area of the former tennis court (see front cover). Natural sands were recorded at a height of 67.2m OD (metres above Ordnance Datum) to the north east of the pitch. To the west and south, the ground level had been raised. No archaeological finds or features were observed.

3.2.2 MUGA (multi-use games area)

The MUGA was located in the south, between the artificial turf pitch and Pitch 1, partially under a former school building and an area of hard standing. Along the northern edge, the natural sands had been truncated by the former school building. The rest of the area of the MUGA had been raised, presumably with fill material derived from terracing. No archaeological finds or features were observed.

3.2.3 Pitch 1 (rugby)

Pitch 1 was located to the south, to the east of the MUGA, partially under a former school building and an area of hard standing (see Fig 3). Along the northern edge, the natural sands had been truncated by the former school building. The rest of the area of the MUGA had been raised, again presumably with fill material derived from terracing. No archaeological finds or features were observed. The eastern extent of the pitch was not observed. This lay under a former car park on ground that had formerly been raised, as indicated by the surrounding levels

3.2.4 Pitch 2 (football)

Pitch 2 was located to the central northern part of the site, in the area occupied by former school buildings. Natural sands were observed at between 68.5m OD and 67.5m OD along the western edge of the area. The rest of the area of Pitch 2 had been truncated by the school building, particularly for the construction of the boiler room (see Fig 4). No archaeological finds or features were observed.

3.2.5 Pitch 3 (football)

Pitch 3 was located to the north-east, on the site of former school buildings. Most of the area of Pitch 3 had been truncated by the school building. Natural sands were seen in pockets but recent demolition had disturbed the ground. No archaeological finds or features were observed.

3.2.6 Other areas

An area to the north-west, under the former school buildings was not reduced.

4 Potential of archaeology

4.1 Original research aims

- *To determine the presence/absence, extent, condition, character, quality and date of any archaeological remains;*

There were no archaeologically significant remains revealed during this phase of the watching brief.

- *To determine the local, regional and national importance of such remains, and the potential for further fieldwork to fulfil local, regional and national research objectives;*

The absence of significant remains mitigates the potential for further fieldwork.

- *To determine the extent and nature of any prehistoric occupation in the study area;*

The absence of prehistoric finds or features in Phase 2 did not determine the extent and nature of the burnt and struck flint seen to the south in Phase 1.

- *To determine the extent and nature of any post-medieval agricultural land use in the study area;*

There was no evidence for post-medieval agricultural land use.

- *To clarify the level of previous truncation across the site.*

The watching brief found that the site had been disturbed by the construction of the former school buildings and surrounding landscaping. In general, the site had been terraced such that the southern half of the site was a raised platform and the northern half was truncated.

4.2 New research aims

There are no new research aims resulting from this phase of the watching brief.

4.3 Significance of the data

No significance can be attached to the results of this phase of the watching brief.

5 Publication and archiving

Information on the results of the excavation will be made publicly available by means of a database in digital form, to permit inclusion of the site data (including the phase works) in any future academic researches into the development of London.

The site archive containing original records and finds will be stored in accordance with the terms of the *Method Statement* (MOL Archaeology 2009) with the Museum of London within 12 months of the end of the excavation.

In view of the limited potential of the material (Section 4) and the limited significance of the data (Section 4.3) it is suggested that a short note on the results of the watching brief should appear in the annual round-up of the *London Archaeologist*.

6 Acknowledgements

The author and MOLA would like to thank the following for their contributions and help in producing this report:

- Mark Nevshehir of Balfour Beatty Construction Ltd
- Leslie Dunwoodie of MOL Archaeology

7 Bibliography

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8 NMR OASIS archaeological report form

OASIS ID: molas1-111932	
Project details	
Project name	Crown Woods School, Eltham
Short description of the project	This second phase of the watching brief carried out at Crown Woods School, Eltham, monitored the Groundworks in preparation for the construction of new sports pitches in the area of the former school buildings. The watching brief found the site had been mostly disturbed by the construction of the former school buildings and the surrounding landscaping. In general the site had been terraced such that the southern half of the site was a raised platform and the northern half was truncated. As a result no finds or features of archaeological significance have been recorded.
Project dates	Start: 09-08-2011 End: 12-10-2011
Previous/future work	Yes / No
Any associated project reference codes	RIF09 - Sitecode
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	None
Current Land use	Community Service 1 - Community Buildings
Investigation type	'Watching Brief'
Prompt	Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPG16
Project location	
Country	England
Site location	GREATER LONDON GREENWICH ELTHAM Crown Woods School, Eltham
Postcode	SE9
Study area	4.00 Hectares
Site coordinates	TQ 443000 748000 51.4532568786 0.07704768519280 51 27 11 N 000 04 37 E Point
Height OD	Min: 65.00m Max: 68.00m
Project creators	
Name of Organisation	MOL Archaeology
Project brief originator	Greater London Archaeology Advisory Service
Project design originator	MOL Archaeology
Project manager	Robin Nielsen
Project supervisor	Isca Howell
Type of funding	Client

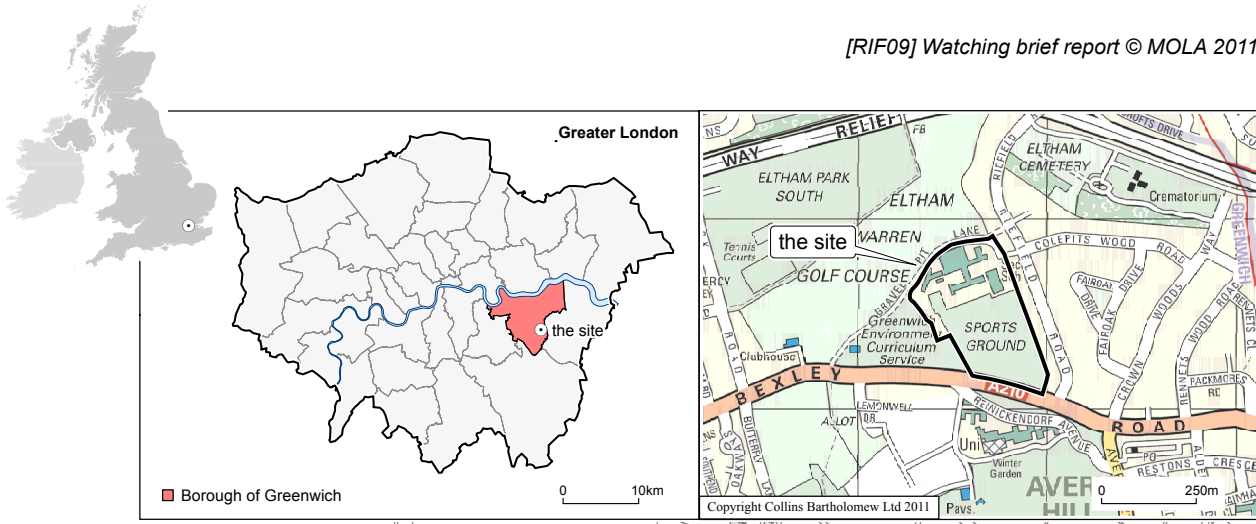
body	
Name of funding body	London Borough of Greenwich
Project archives	
Physical Archive Exists?	No
Physical Archive recipient	LAARC
Physical Archive ID	RIF09
Digital Archive recipient	LAARC
Digital Archive ID	RIF09
Digital Media available	'Images raster / digital photography','Text'
Paper Archive recipient	LAARC
Paper Archive ID	RIF09
Paper Media available	'Diary','Plan','Report'
Project bibliography	
Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Crown Woods School (Phase 2), Riefield Road, Eltham
Author	Howell, I
Date	2011
Issuer	MOL Archaeology
Place of issue	London
Description	unpublished client report

Fig 1 Site location

Fig 2 Areas of watching brief

Fig 3 View over Pitch 1 from east

Fig 4 View of boiler room in Pitch 2 from west



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Scale 1:5,000 @ A4

0 100m

Fig 1 Site location

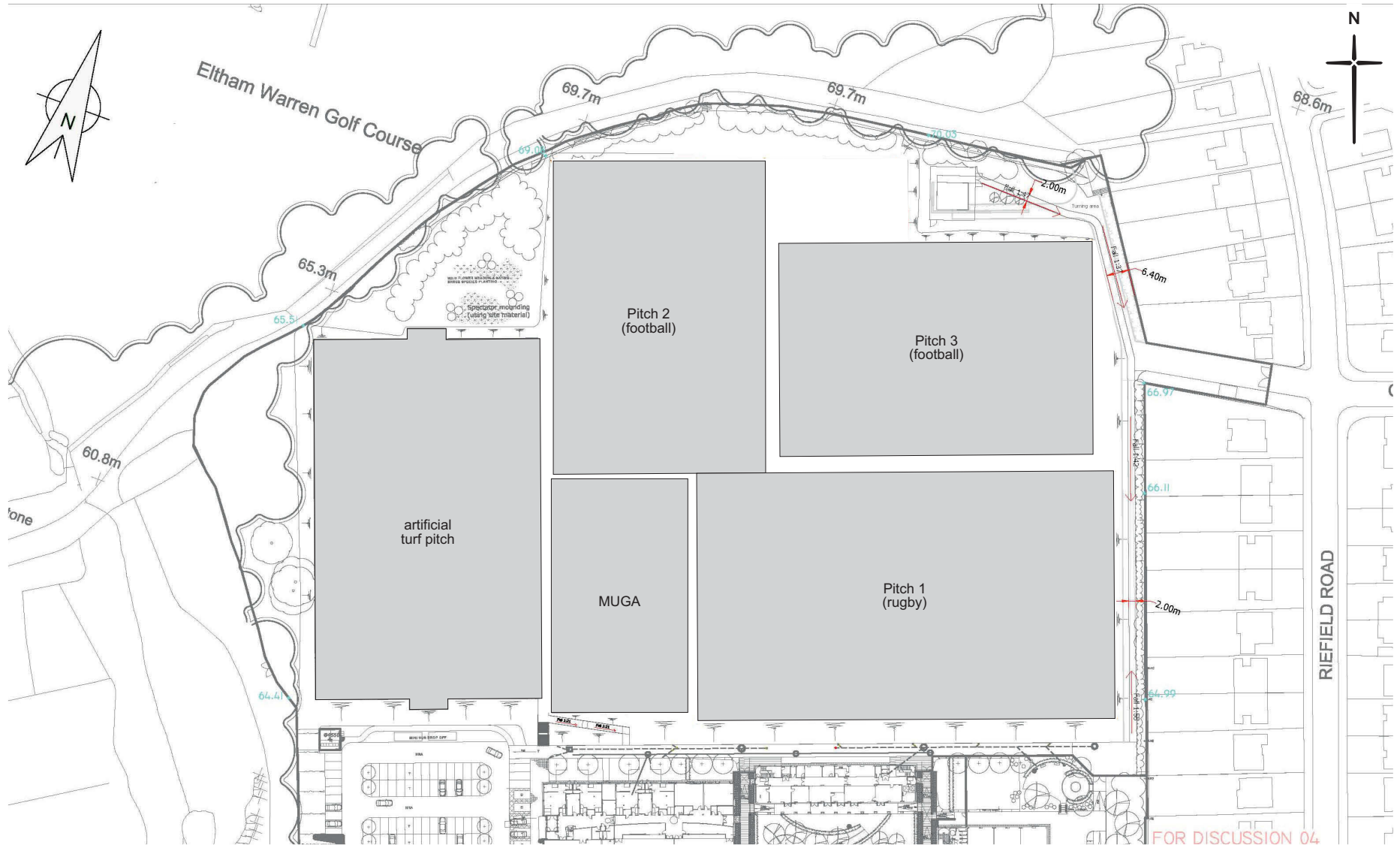


Fig 2 Areas of watching brief



Fig 3 View over Pitch 1 from east



Fig 4 View of boiler room in Pitch 2 from west