



**Northamptonshire
County Council**

Northamptonshire Archaeology

**An archaeological watching brief
at Our Lady and St Chads, R C School
Fallings Park, Wolverhampton
September - October 2005**



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06/14

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QUALITY CONTROL

	Print name	Signed	Date
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Verified by	Andy Mudd		
Approved by	Andy Chapman		

OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		
Project name	An Archaeological Watching Brief at Our Lady and St Chads R.C School, Fallings Park, Wolverhampton	
Short description (250 words maximum)	An archaeological watching brief was undertaken during groundworks connected with the construction of an all weather sports pitch on land at Our Lady and St Chads R.C School, Fallings Park, Wolverhampton. A disturbed stratigraphy was noted across all the development area. No archaeological deposits were present and no artefacts were recovered.	
Project type (eg DBA, evaluation etc)	Watching brief	
Site status (none, NT, SAM etc)	None	
Previous work (SMR numbers etc)	Documentary Assessment BUFAU 1990, Watching brief Northamptonshire Archaeology 2004	
Current Land use	Educational	
Future work (yes, no, unknown)	Unknown	
Monument type/ period	Grade II Listed Building, black Country SMR 494	
Significant finds (artefact type and period)		
PROJECT LOCATION		
County	West Midlands	
Site address (including postcode)	Our Lady and St Chads R.C School, Fallings Park, Wolverhampton, West Midlands	
Study area (sq.m or ha)		
OS Easting & Northing (use grid sq. numbers)	39280 40152	
Height OD	99.21m OD	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Organisation	Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Project brief originator	The Black Country Archaeologist	
Project Design originator	Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Director/Supervisor	David J.Leigh	
Project Manager	Andy Chapman	
Sponsor or funding body	Our Lady and St Chads R.C School	
PROJECT DATE		
Start date	September 2005	
End date	October 2005	
ARCHIVES	Location (Accession no.)	Content (eg pottery, animal bone etc)
Physical		
Paper		Watching brief forms (6) Colour slides (37) Black and white contact prints (37) Digital photographs (30)
Digital	Ditto	Report text and figures

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**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF
AT OUR LADY AND ST CHADS ROMAN CATHOLIC SCHOOL
FALLINGS PARK, WOLVERHAMPTON
SEPTEMBER - OCTOBER 2005**

Abstract

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Northamptonshire Archaeology during the construction of an all weather sports pitch on land at Our Lady and St Chad's, Roman Catholic School, Fallings Park, Wolverhampton. A disturbed stratigraphy was noted across the development area. This may be connected with earlier landscaping works undertaken during the modern development of the present school. No archaeological deposits were present and no artefacts were recovered.

1 INTRODUCTION

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Northamptonshire Archaeology between September and October 2005 during groundworks connected with the construction of an all weather sports pitch on land at Our Lady and St Chad's Roman Catholic School, Fallings Park, Wolverhampton (NGR: SJ 9280 0152: Fig 1). The work was carried out on behalf of the school, and was undertaken to fulfil the requirements of a written specification for archaeological investigation approved by The Black Country Archaeologist on the 7th September 2005.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Location and Topography

The development area lies to the south-east of Wolverhampton City centre and lies on level ground bounded to the east by Old Fallings Lane and to the west by Colley Avenue. The geology has been mapped as Keuper Sandstone and Bunter Marl (British Regional Geology, Central England).

2.2 Historical Background

The area of development lies within the grounds of the Grade II listed building of Old Fallings Hall (Plate 1; Black Country SMR No: 494). The present hall dates from the early 18th century and probably lies on the site of an earlier manor house within the medieval settlement of Old Fallings (SMR No: 8713). The hall has now been incorporated into Our Lady and St Chad's R.C School within a complex of modern school buildings (Fig 2).

Previous archaeological work within the grounds of the school has comprised a Documentary Assessment of Old Fallings Hall (Litherland 1990) and an archaeological watching brief undertaken during the construction of two new teaching blocks (Leigh 2004).

3 OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

The objectives of the watching brief were to:

- ◆ Observe the groundworks associated with the construction of the new sports pitch and associated groundworks.
- ◆ To determine the date, character, state of preservation and depth of any archaeological deposits observed and to retrieve all datable artefacts..

4 THE RECORDED EVIDENCE

The area of the new sports pitch was stripped of grass/topsoil and reduced to formation level, following which drainage channels were excavated around the perimeter of the pitch and a soak-away was excavated adjacent to the pitch on the south-west side. The groundworks were undertaken using a 360° tracked mechanical excavator.

4.1 The sports pitch (Fig 2)

The area of the new sports pitch was reduced to formation level. This revealed a mixed material comprising re-deposited natural clay and sand and grey/brown silt loam containing occasional fragments of modern ceramic building material. This was overlain by mid brown silt loam 0.38m thick, containing numerous fragments of modern ceramic building material, which in turn was sealed by a turf layer 0.09m thick.

4.2 The drainage channels and soak-away (Fig 2)

The drainage channels were excavated to a maximum depth of 0.60m. These revealed a stratigraphy consistent with that across the area of the sports pitch.

A soak-away was excavated at the south-west end of the pitch. Undisturbed natural clay was encountered at a depth of 1.38m below present ground level. This was overlain by mixed re-deposited natural clay and grey/brown silt loam 0.91m thick, containing numerous fragments of modern ceramic building material along with occasional small fragments of plastic sheeting. Overlying this was mid brown silt loam 0.38m thick, containing numerous fragments modern ceramic building material and pockets of red sand. Sealing this was a turf layer 0.09m thick.

5 THE SITE ARCHIVE

The site archive comprises:

RECORD	NUMBER
Watching brief forms	6
Colour slides	37
Black and white contacts and negatives	37
Digital photographs	30

6 CONCLUSIONS

No archaeological deposits were present and no artefacts were recovered. The groundworks revealed that the area of the new sports pitch has been subject to levelling up or landscaping. This occurred relatively recently and is most probably connected with the modern development of Our Lady and St Chad's R.C School. The watching brief was carried out in favourable conditions and the results are considered to be reliable.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

IFA, 1999 *Standards and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief*, Institute of Field Archaeologists

Leigh, D, 2004 *An archaeological Watching Brief at Our Lady and St Chad's R.C School, Fallings Park, Wolverhampton* Northamptonshire Archaeology Client Report

Litherland, S, 1990 *A Documentary Assessment of Old Fallings Hall, Bushbury* Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit Report



Fig 1: Old Fallings Hall, view from the south



Fig 2: General view of development area at the start of groundworks



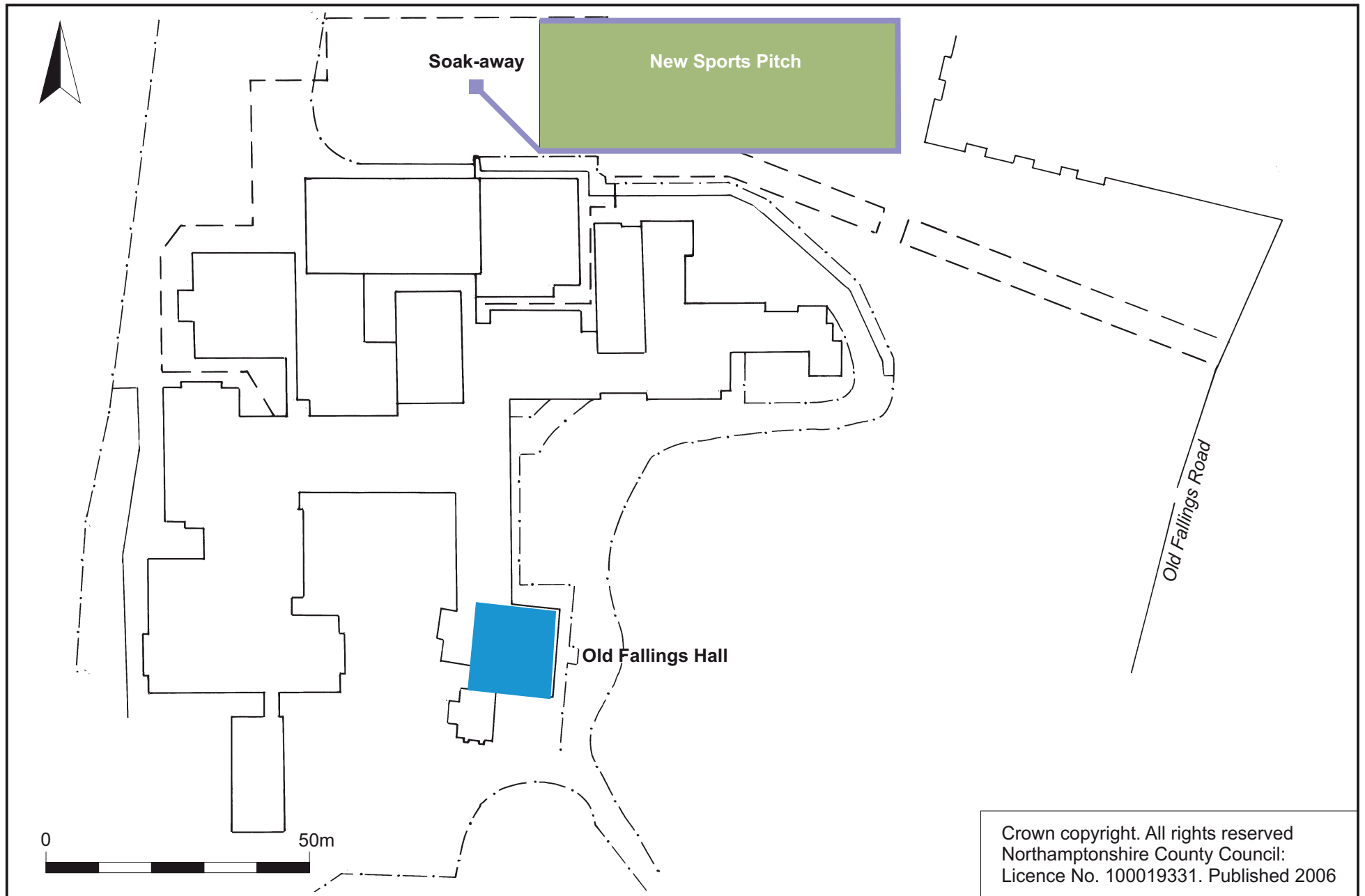
Fig 3: Groundworks in progress



Fig 4: The soak-away during excavation

Scale 1:1000

Fig. 2



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