

Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd

**WATCHING BRIEF:
NO MANS LAND COMMON
SANDRIDGE
HERTFORDSHIRE**

NGR: TL 17437 12302

on behalf of Hertfordshire County Council



Carina Summerfield-Hill MSc

June 2011

ASC: 1406/SNM/2



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Site Data

<i>ASC project code:</i>	SNM	<i>ASC Project No:</i>	1406
<i>OASIS ref:</i>	archaeol2-102203	<i>Accession no:</i>	NLC11
<i>County:</i>	Hertfordshire		
<i>Village/Town:</i>	Sandridge		
<i>Civil Parish:</i>	Sandridge		
<i>NGR (to 8 figs):</i>	TL 1743 1230		
<i>Extent of site:</i>	c.50 sq m		
<i>Present use:</i>	Footpath		
<i>Planning proposal:</i>	Replacement of a set of timber steps		
<i>Planning application ref/date:</i>	n/a		
<i>Local Planning Authority:</i>	St Albans City and District Council		
<i>Date of fieldwork:</i>	01/06/11		
<i>Client:</i>	Hertfordshire County Council County Hall Hertford SG13 8DN		
<i>Contact name:</i>	Julian Thornton (Countryside Access Officer)		

Internal Quality Check

<i>Primary Author:</i>	Carina Summerfield-Hill	<i>Date:</i>	06/06/2011
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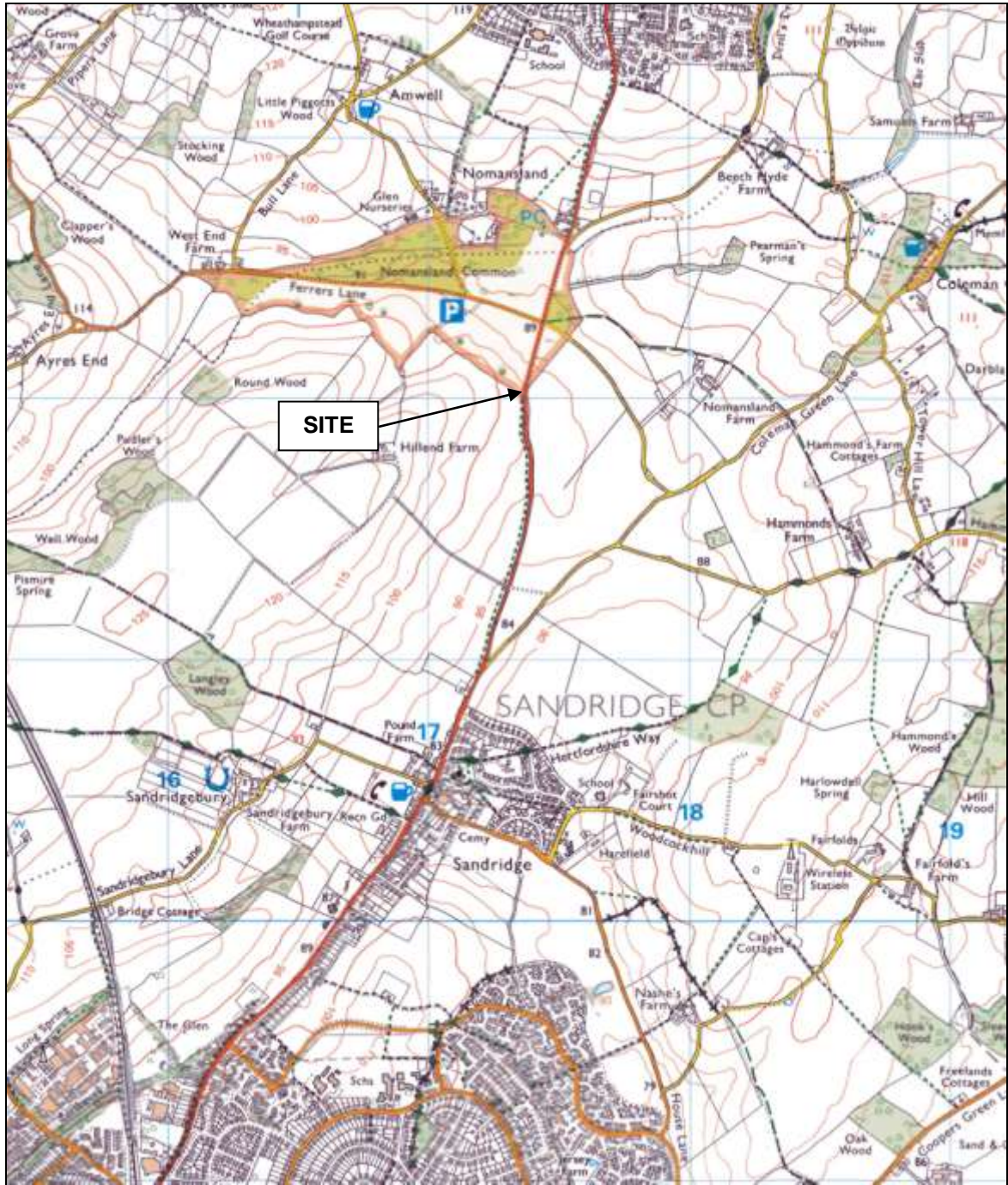


Figure 1: General location (scale 1:25,000)

Summary

In June 2011 an archaeological watching brief was carried out at No Mans Land Common, Sandridge, Hertfordshire during the cutting and filling of an existing bank during the replacement of a set of timber steps. No archaeological finds, features or deposits were observed.

1. Introduction

1.1 In June 2011 *Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd* (ASC) carried out a watching brief at No Mans Land Common, Sandridge, Hertfordshire. The project was commissioned by, *Hertfordshire County Council*, and was carried out according to the requirement of the *St Albans District Council Archaeological Officer* (SADCAO), and a brief prepared by ASC (Rouse 2011).

1.2 *Planning Background*

This watching brief was required under the terms of *Planning Policy Statement 5* (PPS5), as a condition of planning permission for the development of the site.

1.3 *Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd*

ASC is an independent archaeological practice providing a full range of archaeological services including consultancy, field evaluation, mitigation and post-excavation studies, historic building recording and analysis. ASC is recognised as a *Registered Organisation* by the Institute for Archaeologists and is also accredited ISO 9001, in recognition of its high standards and working practices.

1.4 *The Site*

1.4.1 *Location & Description*

The development site is located in the St Albans district of Hertfordshire, in the parish of Sandridge. It lies *c.*1.2km to the north of the village of Sandridge, at NGR TL 1743 1230 (Fig. 1).

The site comprises a section of footpath located on the southern boundary bank of No Mans Land Common, on the western side of the B561. The site is located within woodland, and is accessed by various footpaths (Fig. 2).

1.4.2 *Geology & Topography*

The site is located on a west-east downwards slope, at an elevation of *c.*95mAOD. The soils of the area belong to the Charity 2 Association, which are characterised as *well drained flinty fine soils in valley bottoms. Calcareous fine silty over chalk or chalk rubble on valley sides, sometimes shallow over flinty and chalky drift* (Soil Survey 1983, 571m). The underlying geology comprises Palaeocene Upper Chalk (BGS, Sheet 239).

1.4.3 *Proposed Works*

The proposed works comprise the replacement of a set of timber steps.

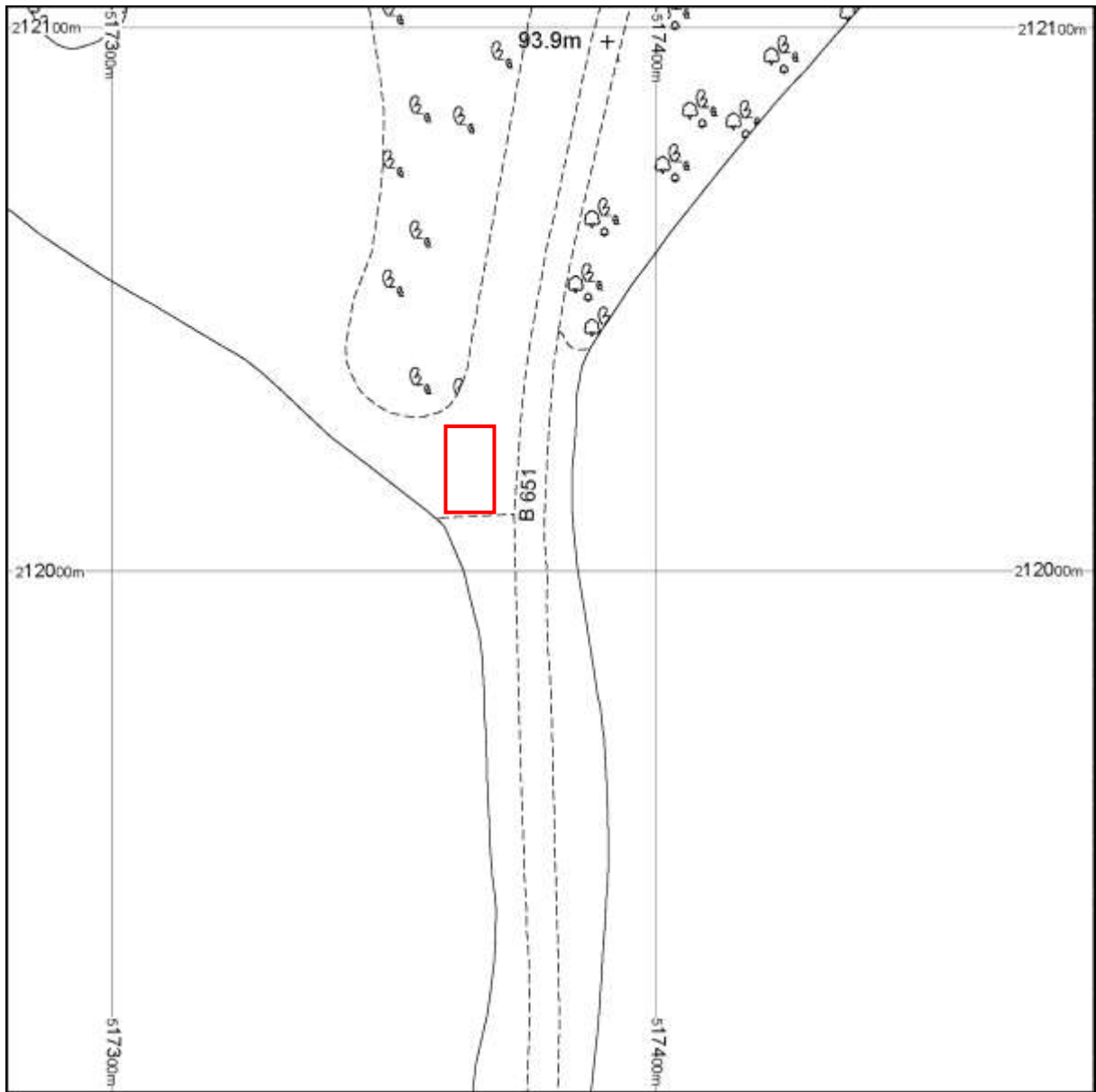


Figure 2: Site plan (scale 1:1250)

2. Aims & Methods

2.1 Aims

As described in the project design (Section 3), the aims of the watching brief were:

- To ensure the archaeological monitoring of all aspects of the development programme likely to have an impact upon archaeological deposits.
- To secure the adequate recording of any archaeological remains revealed by the development programme.
- To secure the analysis, conservation and long-term storage of any artefactual/ecofactual material recovered from the site.
- To provide an adequately detailed project report that will place the findings of the monitoring and recording of the development programme in their local and regional context, having made reference to the relevant regional research agendas, and through cartographic, documentary and other research.

2.2 Standards

The work conformed to the project design, to the relevant sections of the Institute for Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct* (IFA 2000) and *Standard & Guidance Notes* (IFA 2001), to the Association of Local Government Archaeological Officers East of England Region *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England* (ALGAO 2003), and to the relevant sections of ASC's own *Operations Manual*.

2.3 Methods

The work was carried out according to the project design (Section 3), which required:

- Removal of existing surfaces under archaeological supervision.
- Soil and overburden stripping under archaeological supervision.
- The inspection of the subsoil for archaeological features, deposits, and artefacts.
- The rapid investigation and recording of archaeological features or deposits present, including adequate provision of both drawn and photographic records.
- Subsoil stripping under archaeological supervision.
- Rapid examination of spoil-heaps for archaeological material.
- A programme of post-fieldwork analysis, archiving, and publication.

2.4 Constraints

The work was carried out in line with the project design and with full co-operation of the client. No constraints were encountered.

3. Archaeological & Historical Background

3.1 The following section provides a summary of the readily available archaeological and historical background to the development site and its environs. The site lies within an area of archaeological and historical interest, and has the potential to reveal evidence of a range of periods.

This section has been compiled with information from readily available sources and the Hertfordshire Historic Environment Record (HER).

3.2 *Prehistoric* (before 600BC)

Evidence for human activity dating to the Palaeolithic, Mesolithic and Neolithic periods has been recovered from No Mans Land Common, c.0.4km to the north west of the development site, in the form of various flint implements, and a number of cropmarks that are thought to date to this period have also been identified within the surrounding area. The concentration of these finds suggests that there was a high level of prehistoric activity in the area surrounding the development site (Ashworth 2008).

3.3 *Iron Age* (600BC-AD43)

There is very little evidence for human activity in the surrounding area until the later Iron Age period. At this time, two large settlement complexes known as *oppidum* were established in the vicinity of the site, at Wheathampstead, to the north, and St Albans, to the south. The centre of these settlements acted as a market as well as a political and religious focus, often being surrounded by farmstead and smaller outlying settlements.

3.4 *Roman* (AD43-c.450)

During the Roman period the landscape surrounding the development site would have been dominated by the Roman town of Verulamium to the south. As in the Iron Age, there would have been a number of smaller, outlying settlements in the area surrounding the town. One such settlement has been identified c.1.5km to the south east of the development site, along the Peters Green-South Mimms pipeline, which was in use from the late Iron Age through to the 4th century AD (HER9912). Further activity has been suggested closer to the development site, where scatters of Roman coins have been recorded in fields to the southeast of Nomansland Farm (HER13114).

3.5 *Saxon* (c.450-1066)

The development of the Sandridge area during the Saxon period is not well understood. It is likely that any settlements at this time were scattered farmsteads and hamlets.

3.6 *Medieval* (1066-1500)

It is likely that there was a small village at Sandridge by the time of the Domesday Survey (1086). The core of the settlement is likely to have been in the area of the present village, which lies at the point where the line of the Roman road from

Braughing and Welwyn to Verulamium was diverted towards the medieval centre of St Albans in c.AD 1000 (Ashworth 2008).

3.7 ***Post-Medieval - Modern*** (1500- present)

During the post medieval and modern periods, the village of Sandridge has expanded south along the B651, towards St Albans. Cartographic evidence suggests that the area of No Mans Land Common appears to have remained largely unchanged, with some small modern development to the north.

4. Results & Conclusions

4.1 Results

The watching brief was completed in a single visit (Appendix 1). Towards the south-east corner of No Mans Land Common, an area of c.50 sq m was mechanically excavated to a maximum depth of c.0.25m (Plates 1-3). The work entailed the cutting and filling of an existing bank during the replacement of a set of timber steps.

The existing bank was >3m high and consisted of fine/loose light-mid yellowy orange brown loamy silt with rare small sub-angular stones and frequent rooting.

No significant archaeological features, finds or deposits were observed.

4.2 Conclusions

No significant archaeological finds, features or deposits were observed, due to the shallow depth and limited extent of the development.

4.3 Confidence Rating

The results are given a high confidence rating as the work was carried out with full co-operation of the client, in line with the project design and in good site conditions.



Plate 1: Pre-excavation shot of timber steps cut into existing bank (*scale 1m*)



Plate 2: Stratigraphy of existing bank (*scale 500mm*)



Plate 3: Post-excavation shot of the site (*scale 1m*)

5. Acknowledgements

The project was commissioned by *Hertfordshire County Council*. The writer is grateful to Julian Thornton, Countyside Access Officer for his assistance. The project was monitored by the St Albans District Archaeological Officer, Simon West, on behalf of the local planning authority, and Kate Batt of Herts County Council. Thanks are also due to the contractors, Maydencroft Rural Environmental.

The project was managed for ASC by Bob Zeepvat BA MIFA. Fieldwork was carried out by Carina Summerfield-Hill BA MSc. The report was prepared by Carina Summerfield-Hill and edited by Bob Zeepvat.

6. Archive

6.1 The project archive will comprise:

1. Project Design
2. Initial Report
3. Clients site plans
4. Site Monitoring Sheet
5. List of photographs
6. B/W prints & negatives
7. CDROM with copies of all digital files.

6.2 The archive will be deposited with *St Albans Museum*.

7. References

Standards & Specifications

- ALGAO 2003 *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England*. East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Paper **14**.
- EH 1991 *The Management of Archaeological Projects*, 2nd edition. English Heritage (London).
- IFA 2000a Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct*.
- IFA 2000b Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Code of Approved Practice for the Regulation of Contractual Arrangements in Field Archaeology*.
- IFA 2001 Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Standard & Guidance documents (Desk-Based Assessments, Watching Briefs, Evaluations, Excavations, Investigation and Recording of Standing Buildings, Finds)*.
- Rouse, C 2011 *Project Design for a Watching Brief: No Mans Land Common, Sandridge, Hertfordshire*. ASC doc. ref. 1406/SNM/1.

Secondary Sources

- Ashworth, H 2008 *Heartwood Forest, Sandridge, Herts: Archaeological Desk Based Assessment*
Heritage Network
- BGS *British Geological Survey 1:50,000 Series, Solid & Drift Geology*.
- Soil Survey 1983 *1:250,000 Soil Map of England and Wales, and accompanying legend*
(Harpenden).

Appendix 1: Monitoring Sheet

A.S.C. LTD		ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD MONITORING RECORD				
Project: NO MANS LAND COMMON		Project No/Code: 1406 / SNM		Sheet: 1 of 1		
SANDRIDGE, HERTS		Date of visit: 01/06/11				
Client/Developer Herts County Council						
Contact:			Phone:			
Duration of Visit (inc. travel):	Start: 7:20	Finish: 11:20				
Completed by: CS						
Development Type:						
Footings	Services	Roads	Levelling <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Quarrying	Pipelines	
Other (specify):						
Site & weather conditions: GOOD SITE / WEATHER CONDITIONS						
Observations: OBSERVED THE REMOVAL OF WOODEN STEPS TOWARDS THE SE CORNER OF NO MANS LAND COMMON. STEPS CUT INTO A MODERATELY SLOPING BANK > 3m HIGH, INTO A LIGHT - MID YELLOWISH/ORANGE BROWN, FINE/LOOSE GRAINLY SILT WITH RARE SMALL SUB-ANGULAR STONES. PART OF SURROUNDING TREES/BUSHES ALSO CLEARED MINIMUM DEPTH OF TRENCHATION :- c.0.25 M CUT INTO BANK. NO SIGNIFICANT ARCHAEOLOGICAL FINDS. FEATURES OR DEPOSITS WERE OBSERVED						
Comments:						

Appendix 2: List of Photographs

SITE NAME: No Mans Land Common, Sandridge, Hertfordshire		SITE NO/CODE: 1406/SNM	
Shot	B&W	Digital	Subject
1		√	Pre-excavation shot of timber stairs, looking NE (<i>scale 1m</i>)
2	√	√	Pre-excavation shot of timber stairs, looking SW (<i>scale 1m</i>)
3		√	Working shot, looking NE
4		√	General site shot, looking S
5		√	Working shot, looking NE
6	√	√	Stratigraphy of existing bank, looking NW (<i>scale 500mm</i>)
7		√	Post-excavation shot of site, looking NE (<i>scale 1m</i>)

Appendix 3: ASC OASIS Form

PROJECT DETAILS			
Project Name:	No Mans Land Common, Sandridge, Hertfordshire	OASIS reference:	archaeol2-102203
Short Description:	In June 2011 an archaeological watching brief was carried out at No Mans Land Common, Sandridge, Hertfordshire during the cutting and filling of an existing bank during the replacement of a set of timber steps. No archaeological finds, features or deposits were observed.		
Project Type:	Watching Brief		
Previous work: (eg. SMR refs)	None	Site status: (eg. none, SAM, listed)	None
Current land use:	Parkland	Future work: (yes/no/unknown)	No
Monument type:	None	Monument period:	None
Significant finds: (artefact type & period)	None		
PROJECT LOCATION			
County:	Hertfordshire	OS reference: (8 figs min)	TL 17437 12302
Site address: (+ postcode if known)	No Mans Land Common, Sandridge, Hertfordshire, AL4 8EJ		
Study area: (sq. m. / ha)	c.50 sq m	Height OD: (metres)	c.95mAOD
PROJECT CREATORS			
Organisation:	Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd		
Project brief originator:	Simon West (SADAO)	Project design originator:	Calli Rouse BA PIFA
Project Manager:	Bob Zeepvat BA MIFA	Supervisor:	Carina Summerfield-Hill MSc
Sponsor / funding body:	Hertfordshire County Council		
PROJECT DATE			
Start date:	01/06/11	End date:	01/06/11
PROJECT ARCHIVES			
	Location (Accession no.)	Content (eg. pottery, animal bone, files/sheets)	
Physical:	St Albans Museum	None	
Paper:		PD, report, site records, b& w photographs and negatives	
Digital:		CD containing all digital files	
BIBLIOGRAPHY (Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report)			
Title:	Watching Brief: No Mans Land Common, Sandridge, Hertfordshire		
Serial title & volume:	ASC Ltd Report ref. 1406/SNM/2		
Author(s):	Carina Summerfield-Hill MSc		
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