

Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd

**WATCHING BRIEF:
BENGEO PRIMARY SCHOOL
THE AVENUE
BENGEO
HERTFORDSHIRE**

NGR: TL 3224 1404

For Mouchel Group Ltd, on behalf of Hertfordshire County Council



Bob Zeepvat BA MI(A)

June 2012

ASC: 1534/BPS/2



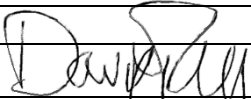
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Site Data

<i>ASC site code:</i>	BPS	<i>Project no:</i>	1534
<i>OASIS ref:</i>	Archaeol2-126328	<i>Event/Accession no:</i>	
<i>County:</i>	Hertfordshire		
<i>Village/Town:</i>	Bengeo		
<i>Civil Parish:</i>	Hertford		
<i>NGR (to 8 figs):</i>	TL 3224 1404		
<i>Extent of site:</i>	c.300 sq m		
<i>Present land use:</i>	School grounds		
<i>Planning proposal:</i>	Erection of a single storey extension and covered walkway link between existing buildings		
<i>Local Planning Authority:</i>	East Hertfordshire District Council		
<i>Planning application ref/date:</i>	3/12/0686/CC		
<i>Date of fieldwork:</i>	7 – 14 June 2012		
<i>Commissioned by:</i>	Mouchel Group Ltd Highways House 41-45 Broadwater Road Welwyn Garden City AL7 3AX		
<i>Client:</i>	Hertfordshire County Council		
<i>Contact name:</i>	Mark Morris/Kevin Liles (Mouchel)		

Internal Quality Check

<i>Primary Author:</i>	Bob Zeepvat	<i>Date:</i>	19/06/2012
<i>Revisions:</i>		<i>Date:</i>	
<i>Edited/Checked By:</i>		<i>Date:</i>	19/06/2012

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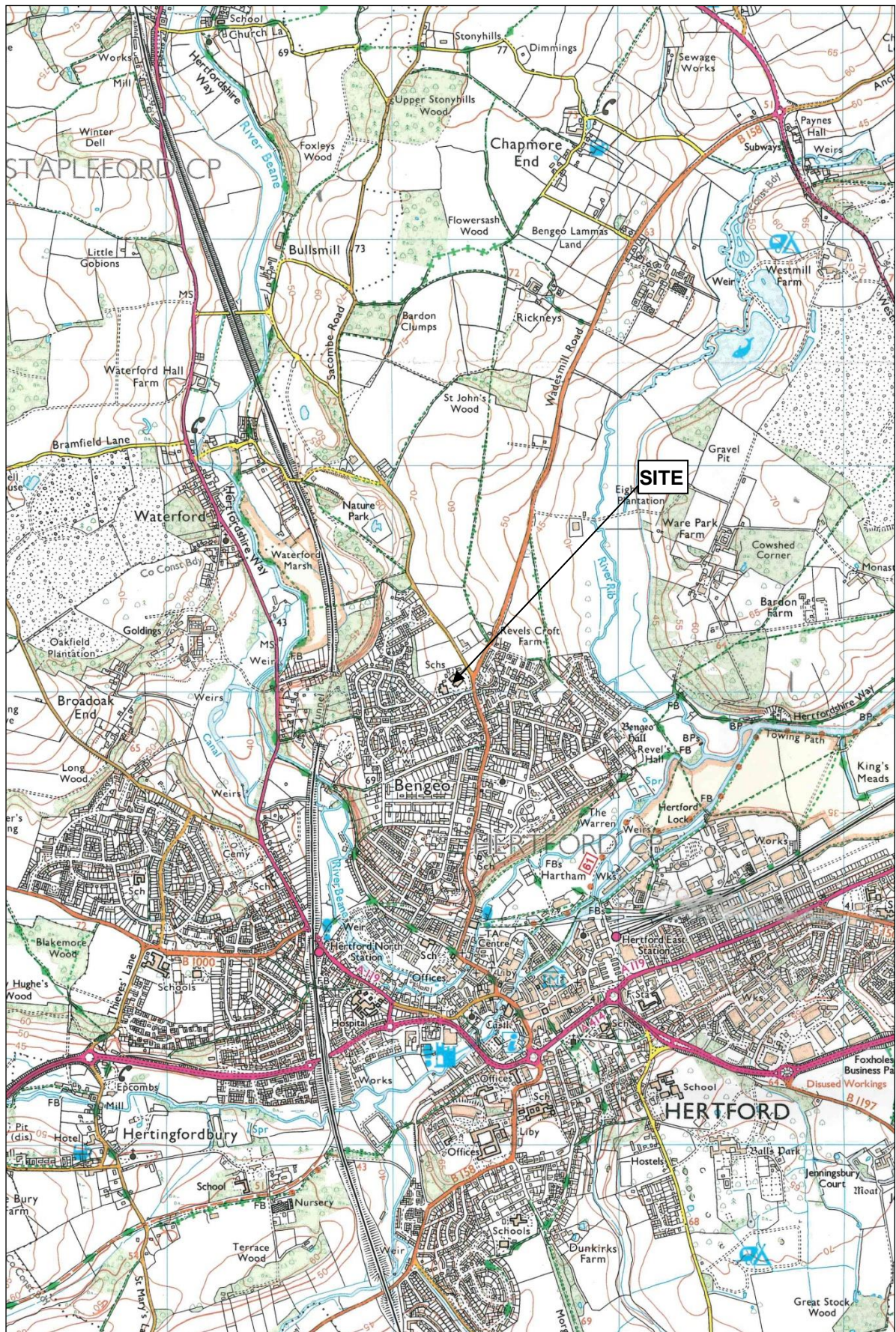


Figure 1: General location (scale 1:25,000)

Summary

In June 2012 a watching brief was undertaken at Bengeo Primary School, The Avenue, Bengeo, during groundworks for extensions to the school buildings. No features, deposits or artefacts of archaeological significance were revealed, apart from a small assemblage of flint debitage. The shallow depth of topsoil on the site, and the absence of a defined subsoil layer, suggest that deposits on the site may have been truncated during the construction of the school, and the abraded condition of the flints suggests that they were brought onto the site with imported topsoil at that time.

1. Introduction

1.1 In June 2012 *Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd* (ASC) carried out a watching brief at Bengeo Primary School, The Avenue, Bengeo, Hertfordshire. The project was commissioned by the *Mouchel Group Ltd* on behalf of *Hertfordshire County Council*, and was carried out according to a project design prepared by ASC (Rouse 2012), and approved by the *Hertfordshire County Council Historic Environment Unit*, archaeological advisor (AA) to the local planning authority (LPA), *East Hertfordshire District Council*. The relevant planning application reference is 3/12/0686/CC.

1.2 *Planning Background*

This watching brief was required under the terms of *National Planning Policy Frameworks* (NPPF), 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*

Bengeo Primary School is located in the county of Hertfordshire, within the district of East Hertfordshire and the parish of Hertford, in the village of Bengeo, at NGR TL 3224 1404 (Fig. 1).

The school occupies an irregular shaped area of land, bordered to the north by open ground, and by residential development on the remaining three sides. Access to the site is from The Avenue, to the south of the site (Fig. 2).

1.4.2 *Topography & Geology*

The site is on relatively flat ground, at an elevation of c.70m AOD. Soils of the area belong to the *Ludford Association*, characterised as *deep well drained fine loamy, coarse loamy and sandy soils, locally flinty in places over gravel. Slight risk of water erosion over glaciofluvial drift* (Soil Survey 1983, 571x).

The underlying geology comprises recent and Pleistocene Boulder Clay, and recent and Pleistocene glacial gravel with Bunter Pebbles (BGS, Sheet 239).

1.4.3 Proposed Development

The proposed development comprises the erection of a single storey extension and covered walkway link between existing buildings, and three additional car park spaces at the north-east corner of the site (Fig. 3).

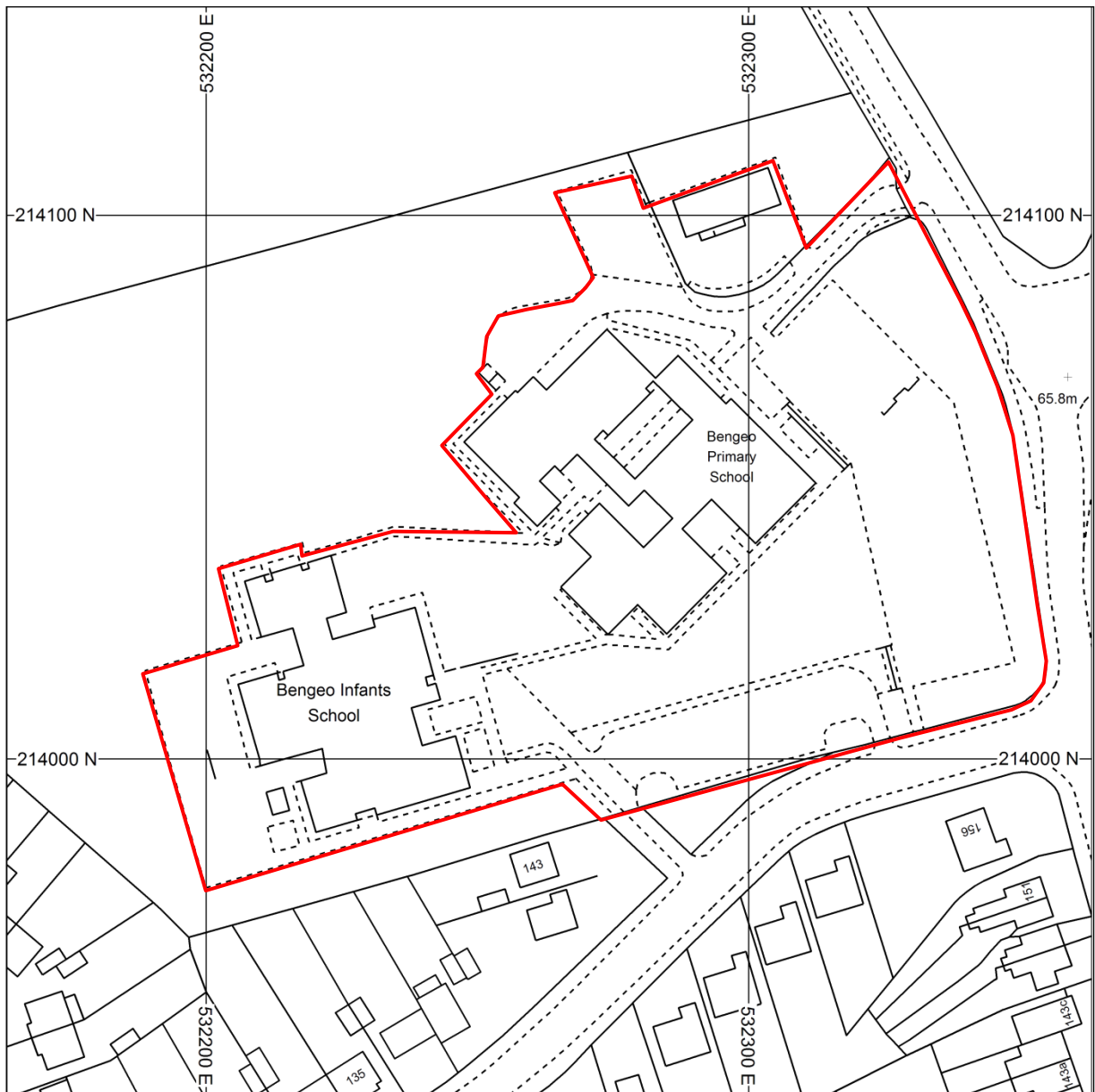


Figure 2: Site plan (scale 1:1250)



Figure 3: Proposed development, shown in red (*scale as shown*)

2. Aims & Methods

2.1 *Aims*

As described in the project design, the aims of the watching brief were:

- To ensure the archaeological monitoring of all aspects of the development programme likely to affect archaeological remains
- 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.

2.2 *Standards*

The work conformed to the project design, to the relevant sections of the Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard & Guidance Notes* (IfA 2008a & b) and *Code of Conduct* (IfA 2010), to current English Heritage guidelines (EH 1991; EH 2006), 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 *Operations Manual*.

2.3 *Methods*

The work was carried out according to the project design, which described:

- Soil and overburden stripping under archaeological supervision
- Inspection of sub-soil deposits for archaeological features
- The rapid investigation and recording of any archaeological features/deposits
- Sub-soil stripping under archaeological supervision
- Examination of any service and foundation trenches and the subsequent recording of any exposed archaeological deposits
- Rapid examination of spoil-heaps for archaeological material
- A programme of post-fieldwork analysis, archiving and publication

2.4 *Constraints*

The watching brief was completed in mostly dry conditions, with the full co-operation of the groundworks contractors, and 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 the Hertfordshire Historic Environment Record (HER, search no.56/12) and other readily available sources, including ASC's own library.

3.2 ***Prehistoric*** (before 600BC-AD43)

Towards the end of the 19th century, Palaeolithic implements were found in gravels excavated from two pits, c.0.6km to the south east of the development site (HER1162).

An excavation carried out in the field directly to the north of Bengeo Primary School revealed a group of at least 13 pits with associated ditches, thought to be late Bronze Age in date. These are thought to have formed part of a field system (Brown 2012).

3.3 ***Roman*** (AD43-c.450)

A watching brief carried out at Bengeo Old House, c.1km to the southwest of the development site, recovered one sherd of Romano-British pottery. It is thought that the area was marshy during and beyond this period (HER11425)

The excavations in the field to the north of the school also uncovered boundary ditches containing Roman pottery and tile, suggesting that some of the Bronze Age features survived into this period (Brown 2012).

3.4 ***Saxon - Medieval*** (c.450-1500)

A shallow pit containing burnt debris excavated in the field to the north of the school was radiocarbon dated to the middle-late Saxon period (Brown 2012).

St Leonard's Church in Bengeo, c.0.65km to the southeast of the development site, was granted to the monks of Bermondsey by Reginald de Tany in 1156, suggesting that the church was already in existence by this time. The manor had a priest at the time of the Domesday Survey (1086), and there is some Saxon work still evident in the fabric of the church (HER2995).

The aforementioned watching brief at Bengeo Old House also recovered 12th-14th century pottery sherds (HER11425).

3.5 ***Post-Medieval to Modern*** (1500-present)

Located close to the church of St Leonard is Bengeo Hall, a 17th century listed building that may be the manorial site of Bengeo. It was refurbished and remodelled in the late 18th century, and a watching brief carried out in 2006 did not record any features that might relate to the manorial site (HER2996).

The site of Molewood water mill (HER5788) is located c.0.8km to the southwest of the development site. The mill was converted to a pumping station in the late 19th century, and it is unclear how much of the original mill survives inside the later

building (HER5655). Close by is the former miller's house, now split into two dwellings (HER15118) and the remains of a weir (HER7242).

Danesbury Cricket ground is located to the southeast of the development site. It is the supposed site of a Danish camp. However, there is no real evidence for this, and its unusual ovoid shape and surrounding rampart and ditch are likely to actually represent a post medieval pillow mound, an earthwork for rabbits (HER4246).

There are several gravel pits known from Ordnance Survey (OS) mapping, within the vicinity of the development site (HER7243, 7245). There are also a number of undated cropmarks, thought to represent buildings, enclosures and ditches, located within 1km of the development site (HER7450, 7458, 7996)

The first readily available map to show the site in detail is the 1880 First Edition OS map, which shows the site as open fields. The site remains unchanged until the mid 1970s, when the school was constructed.

4. Results & Conclusions

4.1 Results

Five watching brief visits were made to the site between 7th and 14th June. The record sheets are reproduced in Appendix 1.

Site stripping for the school building extension and covered walkway (Plate 1) revealed the following site stratigraphy:

0.00 – 0.15m Turf and topsoil: fine silty greyish-brown soil

0.15m+ Natural? Light brown, fine silty layer with abundant flint pebbles and occasional clay lenses (Plate 2). This was subsequently reduced by up to 0.18m, following which footing trenches for the new building were cut into the natural to a depth of c.0.8m (Plate 3).

The only features visible in the stripped area were modern service runs and pits where modern trees/shrubs had been removed. Some flint debitage (Plate 4) was also recovered from the stripped area, though these were not associated with any features.

The flints were shown to Jim Rylatt. He commented that most appeared to be hammer struck, indicative of late Neolithic and early Bronze Age flints. The presence of edge damage suggested that most of the assemblage was residual.

4.2 Conclusions

The watching brief did not reveal any buried archaeological features or deposits. The only finds of possible archaeological interest comprised an assemblage of flint debitage, picked up off the stripped surface. While these could indicate prehistoric activity in the area, the relatively shallow depth of topsoil encountered on the site, and the absence of subsoil, suggest that ground levels may have been modified, possibly when the original school buildings were constructed, truncating or removing any archaeological deposits that may have been present. From the condition of the flint assemblage, it is possible that this material was brought onto the site with imported topsoil.



Plate 1: Extension area during stripping



Plate 2: Detail of extension area after stripping



Plate 3: Footing trench for extension



Plate 4: Flint debitage from extension area

5. Acknowledgements

The project was commissioned by the Mouchel Group Ltd on behalf of Hertfordshire County Council. The writer is grateful to Mark Morris and Kevin Lyle of Mouchel for their assistance. The project was monitored by Alison Tinniswood of Herts CC HEU on behalf of the local planning authority. Thanks are also due to Andy Smith of the groundworks contractors, T&B, for his assistance.

The project was managed for ASC by David Fell BA MA MIFA. Fieldwork was carried out by Andrew Hunn and Jonathan Hunn BA PhD MIFA FSA. The report was prepared by Bob Zeepvat BA MIFA and edited by David Fell.

6. Archive

6.1 The project archive will comprise:

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

6.2 The archive will be deposited with Hertford 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).
- EH 2006 *The Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment*. English Heritage (London).
- IFA 2010 Institute for Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct*.
- IFA 2008a *Standard & Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs*. Institute for Archaeologists (Reading).
- IFA 2008b *Standard & Guidance for Artefact and Environmental Study*. Institute for Archaeologists (Reading).
- IFA 2009 *Standard & Guidance for Archaeological Archives*. Institute for Archaeologists (Reading).
- Rouse C 2012 *Bengeo Primary School, The Avenue, Bengeo, Hertfordshire: Project Design for an Archaeological Watching Brief*. ASC doc. ref. 1534/BPS/1

Secondary Sources

- BGS *British Geological Survey 1:50,000 Series, Solid & Drift Geology*.
- Brown J 2012 *Archaeological Excavations at Sacombe Road, Bengeo, Hertfordshire May 2011* Northamptonshire Archaeology 12/21
- Soil Survey 1983 *1:250,000 Soil Map of England and Wales, and accompanying legend* (Harpenden).

Appendix 1: Monitoring Sheets

A.S.C. LTD		WATCHING BRIEF RECORD				
Project: Bengeo Primary School		Project No/Code: 1534 BPS/1	Sheet: 1 of 5			
		Date of visit: 7. June. 2012				
Client/Developer: Herks CC						
Contact: Andy Smith (T+B) 07971 019014		Phone: 07971 019014				
Duration of Visit (inc. travel):	Start: 0750 (Mk → Bengeo)	Finish: 1715 (Bengeo)				
Completed by: Andrew HUNN						
Development Type:						
Footings	Services	Roads	Levelling	Quarrying	Pipelines	Other (specify): Area strip
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>						
Site & weather conditions:						
Dry until 1:1 - 4.30 pm wet:						
Observations: fine greyish-brown fine silty topsoil stripped off (100- ¹⁵⁰ mm) to reveal light brown-ginger v. fine pebbly fine silt 'natural' - varies between fine → coarse silts with occ. clayey patches. No ancient features observed (x1 drain-run to rectangular soakaway; x2 tree/shrub positions; drain = c. 5.5m L x 0.5m W; Soakaway = c. 1.7m W x 2-3m L 4-5 ft debris; x2 car (part) (EM); several frogs orange tile / CBT; 3-4 digital photos showing ground condition (stripped) + location of strip area.						
Comments: Initial stripping of area for school building extension + covered walkway.						



A.S.C. LTD

WATCHING BRIEF RECORD

Project: <i>Bengeo Primary School</i>		Project No/Code: <i>1534 BPS</i>	Sheet: <i>5 of 5</i>
<i>Hertford</i>		Date of visit: <i>14.6.12</i>	
Client/Developer <i>Herts. C.C.</i>			
Contact: <i>Andy Smith</i>		Phone: <i>07971-01901F</i>	
Duration of Visit (inc. travel):	Start: <i>2.00 pm</i>	Finish: <i>4.30</i>	
Completed by: <i>JRH</i>			
Development Type:			
Footings <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Services	Roads	Levelling
			Quarrying
			Pipelines
			Other (specify):
Site & weather conditions: <i>Dry, over cloud 17c</i>			
Observations: <i>Observed footings in the NE corner of the site. These were 0.7m wide by 0.8m deep below reduced level overburden 0.25m of Top Soil/Sub-Soil. The foundations were cut into an orange-brown sandy gravelly sub-soil.</i> <i>Very pebbly - aggregate like.</i>			
Comments: <i>Apart from service trenches crossing the site there were no pre-modern features present. All within ground.</i> <i>Digitised maps taken + 2 R/W.</i>			

Appendix 2: List of Photographs

SITE NAME: Bengeo			SITE NO/CODE:1534/BPS
Shot	B&W	Digital	Subject
1		3466	View WNW during initial top soil stripping
2		3468	View south during initial topsoil stripping
3		3469	General view of site looking SW
4		3470	General view of site looking west
5		3472	View across partially cleared ground
6		3474	Detail of subsoil conditions view west
7		3475	Collection of flint artefacts and debitage
8	B/W	0675	General view of site looking SE
9		0676	Close up of ground looking SE
10		0677	View west along E-W foundation trench
11		0678	Ditto showing opposite section
12		0679	Detail of services
13		0680	Working view looking ENE
14	B/W	0681	General view of site looking eastwards

Appendix 3: ASC OASIS Form

PROJECT DETAILS			
Project Name:	Bengeo Primary School	OASIS reference:	Archaeol2-126328
Short Description:	In June 2012 a watching brief was undertaken at Bengeo Primary School, The Avenue, Bengeo, during groundworks for extensions and additions to the school buildings. No features, deposits or artefacts of archaeological significance were revealed, apart from a small assemblage of flint debitage. The shallow depth of topsoil on the site, and the absence of a defined subsoil layer, suggest that deposits on the site may have been truncated during the construction of the school, and the abraded condition of the flints suggests that they were brought onto the site with imported topsoil at that time.		
Project Type:	Watching Brief		
Previous work: (eg. SMR refs)	none	Site status: (eg. none, SAM, listed)	none
Current land use:	School grounds	Future work: (yes/no/unknown)	unknown
Monument type:	n/a	Monument period:	n/a
Significant finds: (artefact type & period)	none		
PROJECT LOCATION			
County:	Hertfordshire	OS reference: (8 figs min)	TL 3224 1404
Site address: (+ postcode if known)	Bengeo Primary School, The Avenue, Bengeo		
Study area: (sq. m. / ha)	300 sq m	Height OD: (metres)	70
PROJECT CREATORS			
Organisation:	Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd		
Project brief originator:	Alison Tinniswood HCC	Project design originator:	Calli Rouse ASC
Project Manager:	David Fell ASC	Director/Supervisor:	Jonathan Hunn ASC
Sponsor / funding body:	Hertfordshire County Council		
PROJECT DATE			
Start date:	7/06/12	End date:	13/06/12
PROJECT ARCHIVES			
	Location (Accession no.)	Content (eg. pottery, animal bone, files/sheets)	
Physical:	Hertford Museum	flint	
Paper:		WSI, site records, photos, report	
Digital:		CD with all digital files	
BIBLIOGRAPHY (Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report)			
Title:	Watching Brief: Bengeo Primary School, The Avenue, Bengeo, Hertfordshire		
Serial title & volume:	ASC Ltd Report ref. 1537/BPS/2		
Author(s):	Bob Zeepvat BA MIFA		
Page nos	22	Date:	19/06/12