

Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd

**WATCHING BRIEF & METAL DETECTOR SURVEY:
JOHN RANKIN INFANT AND NURSERY SCHOOL
NEWBURY
WEST BERKSHIRE**

NGR: SU 4587 6569

on behalf of Thomson Roddick & Laurie



Carina Summerfield-Hill BA MSc AIFA

December 2013

ASC: 1622/NJR/2



Letchworth House
Chesney Wold, Bleak Hall
Milton Keynes MK6 1NE
Tel: 01908 608989 Fax: 01908 605700
Email: office@archaeological-services.co.uk
Website: www.archaeological-services.co.uk



Site Data

<i>ASC project code:</i>	NJR	<i>ASC Project No:</i>	1622
<i>OASIS ref:</i>	archaeol2_154003	<i>Event/Accession no:</i>	NEBYM:2013.30
<i>County:</i>	Berkshire		
<i>Village/Town:</i>	Newbury		
<i>Civil Parish:</i>	Newbury		
<i>NGR (to 8 figs):</i>	SU 4587 6569		
<i>Extent of watching brief:</i>	c. 233sq m		
<i>Present use:</i>	School grounds		
<i>Planning proposal:</i>	Construction of two extensions to existing classrooms with associated hard and soft play areas		
<i>Local Planning Authority:</i>	West Berkshire Council		
<i>Planning application ref:</i>	13/00950/FUL		
<i>Date of fieldwork:</i>	16/10/13-05/11/13		
<i>Client:</i>	Thomson Roddick & Laurie Suite 13 Maple Court Grove Park Maidenhead SL6 3LW		
<i>Contact name:</i>	John Wren		

Internal Quality Check

<i>Primary Author:</i>	Carina Summerfield-Hill	<i>Date:</i>	16/12/13
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<i>Revisions:</i>		<i>Date:</i>	
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<i>Edited/Checked By:</i>		<i>Date:</i>	19 Dec 2013
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Figure 1: General location (Scale 1:25,000)

Summary

Between October and November 2013 an archaeological watching brief and metal detector survey was carried out at the John Rankin Infant and Nursery School, Newbury, West Berkshire during the construction of an extension to the nursery hub building and an extension to the infant school. No significant archaeological remains were revealed during the metal detector survey. The groundworks for the extension to the nursery hub building revealed modern bank/terracing from the schools original construction, and the infant school extension revealed the natural stratum directly beneath modern tarmac/concrete. No significant archaeological finds, features or deposits were observed, and the archaeological impact of the development is considered to be low.

1. Introduction

1.1 Between October and November 2013 *Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd* (ASC) carried out a watching brief and metal detector survey at the John Rankin Infant School, Newbury, West Berkshire. The project was commissioned by *Thomson, Roddick & Laurie*, and was carried out according to a project design prepared by ASC (Muldowney 2013), and approved by West Berkshire Archaeology Service, archaeological advisor (AA) to the local planning authority (LPA), *West Berkshire District Council*. The relevant planning application reference is 13/00950/FUL.

1.2 *Planning Background*

This watching brief was required under the terms of the *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*

The site is situated in Newbury, in the administrative district of West Berkshire. It lies to the southwest of the town centre, on the west sides of Henshaw Crescent and Garford Crescent and is centred on Ordnance Survey National Grid Reference SU4587 6569 (Fig. 1).

The school grounds are roughly D-shaped with both schools lying in the south half. They are bounded on the south and west sides by a hedgeline with trees and to the north and west by housing (Fig. 2). At the time of writing there were no available service plans, but it is reasonable to assume, given the suburban nature of the site, that a number of both below and above ground services are present.

1.4.2 *Topography & Geology*

The land rises from an elevation of *c.*90m AOD at the north end of the assessment area to *c.*100m AOD to the south.

Soils of the area have not been surveyed but are likely to comprise *well drained flinty coarse loamy and gravelly soils of the Sonning 2 Association, linked with slowly permeable seasonally waterlogged fine loamy over clayey soils, and coarse loamy over clayey soils with slowly permeable subsoils and slight seasonal waterlogging* over plateau and river terrace drift (Soil Survey 1983, 581c). Previous work has shown that the soils of the area have been truncated and that the natural profile may not survive.

The underlying geology comprises a mix of the Harwich Formation sand silt and clay, and the Lambeth Group orange clay (BGS, Sheet 267).

1.4.3 *Proposed Development*

The proposed development comprises an extension and hard play area to the infant school, and an extension to the nursery hub building and soft play area (Fig. 3).

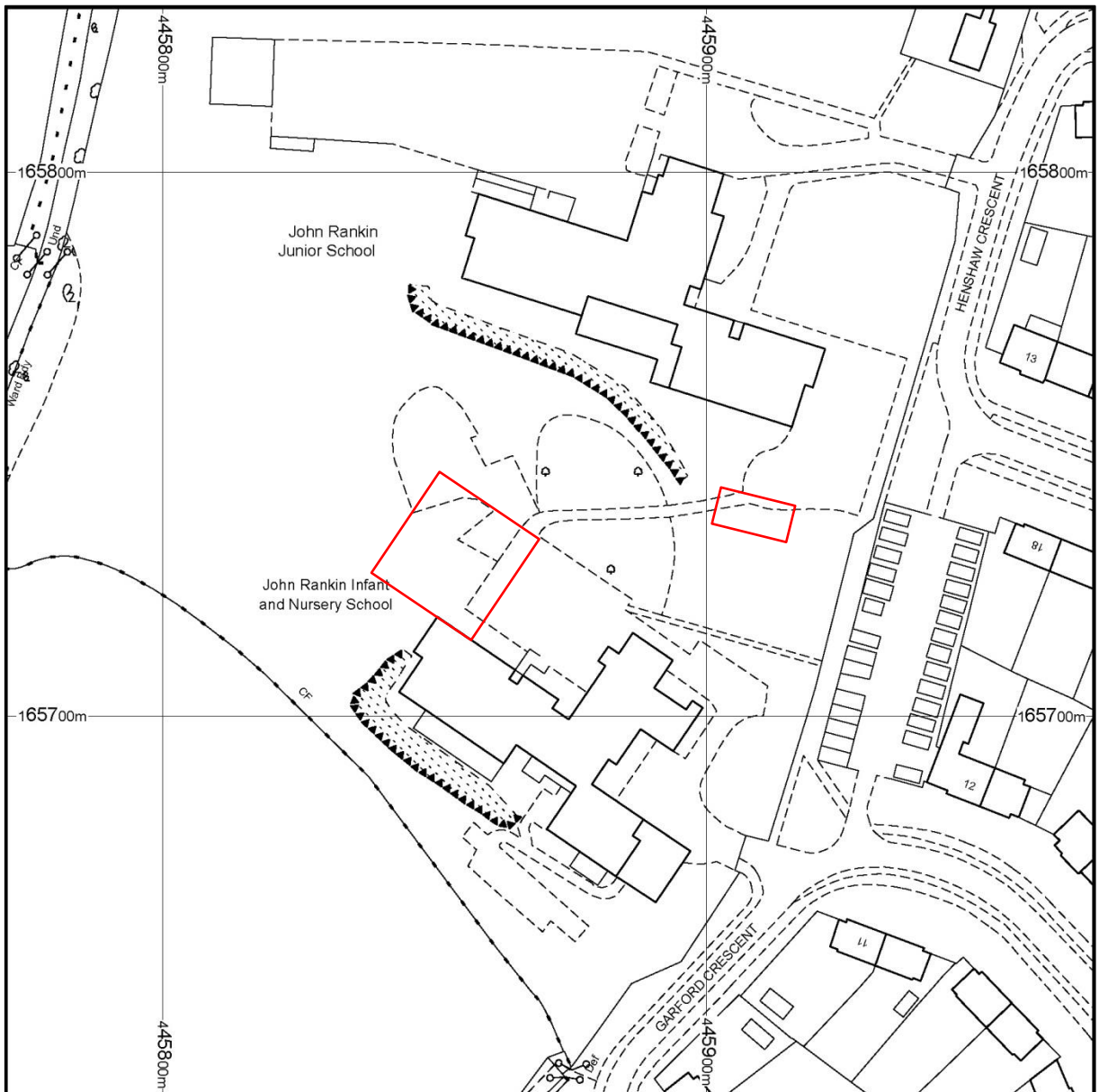


Figure 2: Site plan with highlighted development areas (Scale 1: 1:1250)

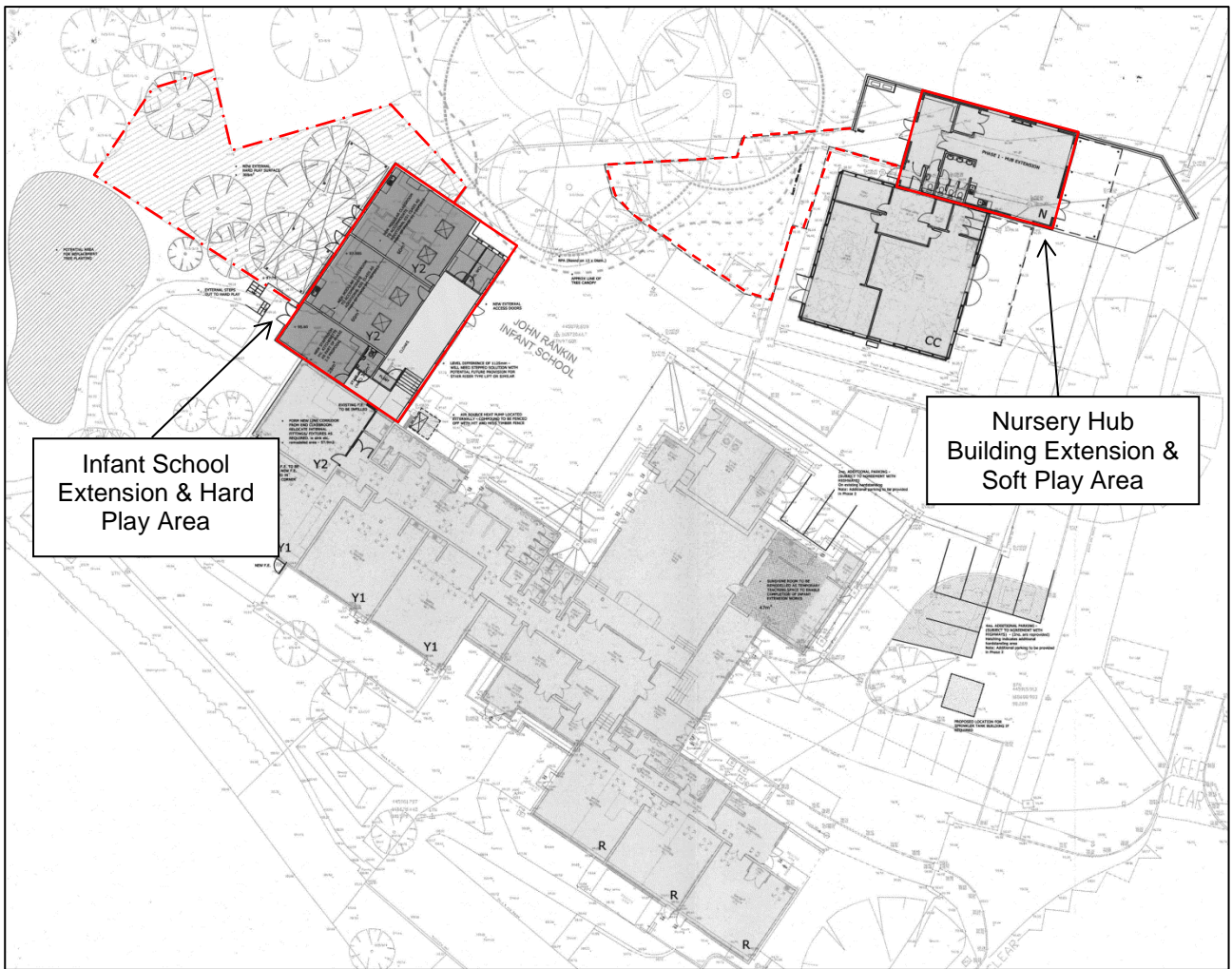


Figure 3: Proposed development (*not to scale*)

2. Aims & Methods

2.1 *Aims*

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

- To recover archaeologically significant metal objects from the subsoil, paying particular attention to artefacts related to the Civil War
- 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' *Standard & Guidance Notes* (IfA 2008a & b) and *Code of Conduct* (IfA 2010), to current English Heritage guidelines (EH 2006), 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:

- A metal detector survey
- Site stripping under archaeological supervision, with a toothless ditching bucket
- Inspection of sub-soil deposits to look for archaeological features;
- The rapid investigation and recording of deposits;
- Examination of spoil-heaps for archaeological material;
- A programme of post-fieldwork analysis and archiving.

2.4 *Constraints*

A large part of the development area for the new extension to the infant school was laid into tarmac and metal detecting could only take place in a small area to the northwest which was set to grass.

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.

The archaeological and historical background has already been documented in a *Heritage Asset Impact Assessment* report (Fell 2013) and is reproduced here in brief.

3.2 *Prehistoric* (before AD43)

The valley of the river Kennet was of considerable importance during the prehistoric periods (Lobb & Rose 1996) although there is currently only very limited evidence for the early development of the area. An important assemblage of Palaeolithic to middle Bronze Age flint artefacts has been recorded from Enbourne Gate Farm Gravel Pit c. 400m north of the site (Historic Environment Record (HER) 10069). A number of artefact scatters have been recorded in the area (eg HER 9347, 11567, etc.) and a number of linear features have been traced as cropmarks during aerial photographic survey (HER 2167 – 2169), which may be prehistoric in date. A significant settlement developed during the Iron Age at Enborne Gate Farm, c.500m north of the site (HER 15647).

3.3 *Roman* (AD43-c.450)

Roman occupation was also identified at Enborne Gate Farm where a substantial building, interpreted as a villa, has been recorded (HER 4826). A variety of Roman period artefacts and settlement features have also been recorded in the area, notably a small cremation cemetery (HER 4829).

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

Newbury is not mentioned in the Domesday Survey of 1086, but it is known that a settlement at Newbury was established by the 11th century, and grew in significance in the 12th and early 13th centuries when the castle was besieged by King Stephen (OA 2005). The site probably comprised open land during the Saxon and medieval periods and may have formed part of the open field system of the parish of Enborne. Traces of medieval ridge and furrow cultivation strips have been identified across the land to the west (HER 20081).

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

The site lies within a designated historic battlefield area in which the Battle of Newbury (20th Sept. 1643) took place. Although there is currently no evidence for activity or artefacts associated with the battle within the site a number of musket balls have been recovered from the surrounding area (HER 16083).

Rocque's map of Berkshire (1761) (Fell 2013, fig. 10) shows the landscape divided into large rectangular enclosures, traversed by a sinuous route leading north from *Newbury Wash* and *Three Burrows* towards the river Kennet. By 1775, Matthias's map of Enbourne (Fell 2013, fig. 12) shows the site divided into two separate land parcels (nos. 104 & 106) with the parish boundary to the east. The same layout is shown on the Elbourne Tithe Map (1845) (Fell 2013, fig. 13).

Ordnance Survey maps produced from the early 19th century onwards indicate that the site remained essentially unchanged during the 19th and first half of the 20th centuries and the two separate land parcels remained.

Map evidence suggests that there had been no activity on the site until construction of both the infant and nursery school and junior school in the 1950s.

In 2011 ASC carried out an archaeological watching brief during the construction of the Hub Building. The project revealed up to metre of modern re-deposited material was present in the area, with the former natural topsoil layer surviving below the modern material. The project also revealed a post-medieval pond-like feature of little archaeological significance (Rouse & Cuthbert 2011).

4. Results & Conclusions

4.1 Introduction

In line with the requirements of the AO, the project comprised two aspects; a metal detector survey and a watching brief on the groundwork's associated with the new development. They are described as follows:

4.2 Metal Detector Survey (Plate 1)

Tarmac was present on the majority of the development areas. However, a small area to the northwest of the infant school extension (within the proposed development for the new hard play area) was set to grass which was surveyed. No significant archaeological finds were recovered.

4.3 Watching brief

The watching brief entailed the monitoring of the ground reduction for extensions to the nursery hub building and the infant school. A hard and soft play area was also excavated, however, it was deemed to be unnecessary to monitor the play areas as this only entailed shallow excavation.

New Extension to Nursery Hub Building: (Plates 2 and 3)

The ground reduction for the new extension took place over an area of c.26 sq. m. The area was reduced by between 0.4 and 1.05m. The stratigraphy comprised c.0.1-0.26m of topsoil, which overlay c.0.14 to 0.95m of re-deposited clay, interpreted as modern bank/terracing, underlying which was the natural stratum which consisted of orange clay. No significant archaeological finds, features or deposits were observed.

New Extension to Infant School: (Plates 4 and 5)

The ground reduction for the new extension took place over c.55 sq. m. The area was reduced by c.0.5m in order to accommodate a piling mat. The stratigraphy comprised tarmac/concrete directly over the natural stratum which was found at a depth of c.0.25m below ground level and consisted of orange clay with variations to blue with occasional large pebbles. No significant archaeological finds, features or deposits were observed.

4.4 Conclusions

The development site lies within a designated historic battlefield area (Battle of Newbury 20th September 1643). No significant archaeological remains or artefacts were observed during the metal detector survey and watching brief. Previous archaeological works at the site (Rouse & Cuthbert 2011; Fell 2013) suggest that the area had been landscaped during the construction of the school during the 1960s and these works are likely to have truncated any archaeological remains which may have been present.

The current observations have confirmed the results of the previous investigation and the area of the hub building extension has also been shown to have been disturbed. It is unlikely that significant archaeological remains are present on the site and the archaeological impact of the development is judged to have been low.

4.5 Confidence Rating

The works were carried out with full co-operation of the client and in good site conditions. A high confidence rating is assigned to the results of the investigations.



Plate 1: Metal detector survey area



Plate 2: Ground reduction for nursery hub building extension, looking SE (*scale 1m*)



Plate 3: Modern banking within area of nursery hub building extension, looking NW (*scale 1m*)



Plate 4: Ground reduction for infant school extension looking NE (*scale 1m*)



Plate 5: Ground reduction stratigraphy in infant school extension area (*scale 1m*)

5. Acknowledgements

The project was commissioned by *Thomson, Roddick & Laurie* on behalf of *West Berkshire District Council* and the writer is grateful to John Wren for his assistance. The project was monitored by Sarah Orr BA MSc PGCE MifA of the *West Berkshire Archaeology Service* on behalf of the local planning authority. Thanks area also due to Stuart Darwin (site foreman).

The project was managed for *ASC Ltd* by David Fell BA MA MIFA. Fieldwork was carried out by Martin Cuthbert BA AIFA and Ralph Brown BA. The report was prepared by Carina Summerfield-Hill BA MSc AIFA 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. CDROM with copies of all digital files.

6.2 The archive will be deposited with *West Berkshire Museum*.

7. References

Standards & Specifications

- EH 2006 *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment*. English Heritage (London).
- IFA 2010 Institute for Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct*.
- IFA 2008 Institute for Archaeologists' *Code of Approved Practice for the Regulation of Contractual Arrangements in Field Archaeology*.
- IFA (various dates) Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard & Guidance* documents (*Desk-Based Assessments 2011, Watching Briefs 2008, Evaluations 2009, Excavations 2008, Investigation and Recording of Standing Buildings 2008, Finds 2008, Archiving 2009*).
- Muldowney M 2013 *John Rankin School, Newbury, West Berkshire: Project Design for Archaeological Watching Brief and Metal Detection Survey* ASC Ltd Report no. **1622/NJR/1**.

Secondary Sources

- BGS *British Geological Survey 1:50,000 Series, Solid & Drift Geology*.
- Fell D 2013 *John Rankin Infant and Junior School, Newbury, Berkshire A Heritage Asset Impact Assessment* ASC Ltd Report no. **1606/NJR/2r**.
- Lobb S J & Rose P G, 1996 *Archaeological Survey of the Lower Kennet Valley* Wessex Archaeology report **9**.
- Rouse C & Cuthbert M 2011 *Metal Detector Survey & Watching Brief: John Rankin Infant & Nursery School, Newbury, West Berkshire*. ASC Ltd Report no. **1395/NJR/2**.
- OA 2005 *Newbury Historic Character Assessment Report*. Oxford Archaeology report no. **5354**.
- Soil Survey 1983 *1:250,000 Soil Map of England and Wales, and accompanying legend* (Harpenden).

Appendix 1: Monitoring Sheets



WATCHING BRIEF RECORD

Project: John Rankin Infant School metal detector survey.		Project No/Code: 1622 / NJR	Sheet: 1 of 3
Client/Developer		Date of visit: 16/10/13	
Contact:		Phone:	
Duration of Visit (inc. travel):	Start: 08:00	Finish: 12:30	
Completed by: M.C			
Development Type:			
Footings	Services	Roads	Levelling
			Quarrying
			Pipelines
			Other (specify): metal detector survey ✓
Site & weather conditions: wet.			
Observations: The vast proportion of the development area was laid to tarmac. Therefore metal detecting could not take place. A small area to the northwest was set to grass, therefore the survey was concentrated here. No archaeological finds were recovered.			
Comments: No more visits required at this stage of works.			



A.S.C. LTD

WATCHING BRIEF RECORD

Project: JOHN RANKIN SCHOOL		Project No/Code: 1622 INJR	Sheet: 2 of 3
NEWBURY W. BERKSHIRE		Date of visit: 31/10/13.	
Client/Developer			
Contact: STUART DARWIN		Phone: 07921 309725	
Duration of Visit (inc. travel):	Start: 7.20	Finish: 17.30	
Completed by: ALPH BROWN			
Development Type:			
Footings	Services	Roads	Levelling <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
			Quarrying
			Pipelines
			Other (specify):
Site & weather conditions: OVERCAST			
Observations: LEVELLED GROUND OF NORTHERN CLASSROOM EXTENSION MOSTLY DUG THROUGH MODERN BANK/TERRACING FROM PREV SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION DIDN'T REALLY DIG INTO THE NATURAL CLAY BANK MADE OF REDPOSITED NATURAL CLAY IN SOUTH WENT DOWN 1.05m DEEP COMPRISING 0.1m TOPSOIL 0.95m REDPOSITED CLAY BANK MATERIAL AND 0.1m WENT INTO NATURAL 0.4m DEEP IN NORTH AND 0.14m REDPOSITED NAT 0.26m TOPSOIL WHERE THERE'S PLAY GROUND IN NE CORNER OF FOOT PRINT LEFT IN AS STRONG ENOUGH FOR PILING RIG MOST OF SOUTHERN CONSTRUCTION WORK WILL ALSO BE ACROSS PLAY GROUND ∴ ONLY SMALL AMOUNT TO BE STRIPPED			
Comments: STRIPPING SMALL AMOUNT ON SOUTHERN BUILDINGS ON MONDAY. STUART WILL PHONE TOMORROW OR LATER.			



WATCHING BRIEF RECORD

Project: John Rankin School		Project No/Code: 1622 NJR	Sheet: 3 of 3
Newbury		Date of visit: 5/11/13	
Client/Developer			
Contact: Stuart Darwin-Foreman		Phone: 07921 309725	
Duration of Visit (inc. travel):	Start: 07:20	Finish: 13:00	
Completed by: M.C			
Development Type:			
Footings	Services	Roads	Levelling ✓
			Quarrying
			Pipelines
			Other (specify):
Site & weather conditions: wet			
Observations: Reducing an area of c. 0.5m for piling mat. tarmac/concrete onto natural - no natural soil profile. natural = orange clay, natural variations to blue occ large pebbles. natural directly below tarmac + concrete @ a depth of 0.25m			
Comments: files to be dug then beams. However beams to be dug through natural as no natural soil profile exists. Therefore monitoring not necessary.			

Appendix 2: List of Photographs

SITE NAME: John Rankin Infant & Nursery School, Newbury, West Berkshire		SITE NO/CODE: 1622/NJR
Shot	Subject	
1	Metal detection survey west of infant school extension	
2	Metal detection survey west of infant school extension	
3	Nursery extension stripped area looking southeast	
4	Nursery extension stripped area looking east	
5	Nursery extension stripped area looking east	
6	Nursery extension stripped area looking east	
7	Section through made ground on southeastern side of nursery extension	
8	Made ground on northwestern side of nursery extension	
9	Nursery extension stripped area looking southeast	
10	Nursery extension stripped area looking northwest	
11	Nursery extension stripped area looking northwest	
12	Nursery extension stripped area looking north	
13	Nursery extension stripped area looking southwest	
14	Made ground in west of nursery extension looking southwest	
15	Made ground in west of nursery extension looking southwest	
16	Section towards north of nursery extension looking southeast	
17	Nursery extension stripped area looking northeast	
18	Nursery extension stripped area looking east	
19	Section of made ground in the west of nursery extension looking northwest	
20	Ground reduction for infant school extension looking SW	
21	Ground reduction for infant school extension looking S	
22	Stratigraphy of ground reduction for infant school extension looking S	
23	Ground reduction for infant school extension looking SW	
24	Ground reduction for infant school extension looking N	
25	Ground reduction for infant school extension looking N	
26	Ground reduction for infant school extension looking W	
27	Ground reduction for infant school extension looking W	
28	Stratigraphy of ground reduction for infant school extension looking NW	
29	Ground reduction for infant school extension looking NW	
30	Ground reduction for infant school extension looking NE	
31	Ground reduction for infant school extension looking NE	

Appendix 3: ASC OASIS Form

PROJECT DETAILS			
Project Name:	John Rankin Infant & Nursery School, Newbury, West Berkshire	OASIS reference:	archaeol2-154003
Short Description:	Between October and November 2013 an archaeological watching brief and metal detector survey was carried out at the John Rankin Infant and Nursery School, Newbury, West Berkshire during the construction of an extension to the nursery hub building and an extension to the infant school. No significant archaeological remains were revealed during the metal detector survey. The groundworks for the extension to the nursery hub building revealed modern bank/terracing from the schools original construction, and the infant school extension revealed the natural stratum directly beneath modern tarmac/concrete. No significant archaeological finds, features or deposits were observed, and the archaeological impact of the development is considered to be low.		
Project Type:	Metal detector survey & watching brief		
Previous work: (eg. SMR refs)	ASC: 1395/NJR ASC:1606/NJR	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:	Berkshire	OS reference: (8 figs min)	SU 4587 6569
Site address: (+ postcode if known)	John Rankin School, Newbury, West Berkshire, RG14 6EX		
Study area: (sq. m. / ha)	c.233 sq. m	Height OD: (metres)	c.90-100m
PROJECT CREATORS			
Organisation:	Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd		
Project brief originator:	West Berkshire Arch Service	Project design originator:	Mo Muldowney BA AIFA 2013
Project Manager:	David Fell BA MIFA	Supervisor:	Martin Cuthbert BA AIFA
Sponsor / funding body:	John Rankin School		
PROJECT DATE			
Start date:	16/10/13	End date:	05/11/13
PROJECT ARCHIVES			
	Location (Accession no.)	Content (eg. pottery, animal bone, files/sheets)	
Physical:	West Berkshire Museum	None	
Paper:		Pd, report, site records	
Digital:		CD with all digital files	
BIBLIOGRAPHY (Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report)			
Title:	Metal Detection Survey & Watching Brief: John Rankin Infant & Nursery School, Newbury, West Berkshire		
Serial title & volume:	ASC Ltd Report ref. 1622/NJR/2		
Author(s):	Carina Summerfield-Hill BA MSc AIFA		
Page nos	20	Date:	19/12/13