

Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd

WATCHING BRIEF: ALDWICKBURY PARK GOLF CLUB HARPENDEN HERTFORDSHIRE

NGR: TL 1537 1403

on behalf of The Burhill Group



Ralph S Brown BSc

February 2014

ASC: 1630/APG/2



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Site Data

ASC project code:	APG		ASC project no:	1630		
OASIS ref:	155309		Event/Accession no:			
County:		Hertford	shire			
Village/Town:		Aldwick	bury			
Civil Parish:		Wheatha	mpstead			
NGR (to 8 figs):		TL 1537	1403			
Extent of site:		9200m ²				
Present use:		Golf cou	rse			
Planning proposal:		Construction of extension to existing clubhouse, new pedestrian access and associated services				
Local Planning Authority	ority:	St Albans City and District Council				
Planning application	ref:	5/13/0932				
Date of fieldwork:		05/11/13-15/11/13				
Commissioned by:		Clague LLP				
		1 Kinsbourne Court				
		Luton Road				
		Harpenden				
		Hertfordshire				
		AL5 3BL				
Client:		The Burhill Group Ltd				
		Burhill				
		Walton on Thames				
		Surrey				
		KT12 4BX				
Contact name:		Pauline Ford (Clague)				

Internal Quality Check

Primary Author:	Ralph S. Brown	Date:	19 th February 2014
Revisions:		Date:	
Edited/Checked By:		Date:	

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

Summary

In November 2013 a strip map and sample excavation was started during the construction of an extension to the club house at Aldwickbury Park Golf Club, Harpenden, Hertfordshire. This was subsequently changed to a watching brief once the gradient and depth of the made ground made it impractical to strip the whole footprint down to natural geology.

The foundation trenches were monitored and a single pit was found on the north-western edge of the extension footprint. This contained three small sherds of Early Roman pottery and is likely to be contemporary with a large area of flood derived silt containing Early Roman pottery which was found c.8m to the north during the original construction of the golf course.

1. Introduction

1.1 In November 2014 Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd (ASC) carried out a watching brief at Aldwickbury Park Golf Club, St Albans, Hertfordshire. The project was commissioned by Clague LLP on behalf of The Burhill Group, and was carried out according to a project design prepared by ASC (Fell 2013), and approved by the St Albans District Archaeologist, archaeological advisor (AA) to the local planning authority (LPA), St Albans City and District Council. The relevant planning application reference is 5/13/0932.

1.2 **Planning Background**

This watching brief was required under the terms of the *National Planning Policy Framework* (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 near Harpenden, in the parish of Wheathampstead and the administrative district of St Albans, Hertfordshire. It lies to the east of Harpenden, between Wheathampstead Road and Piggottshill Wood and is centred on Ordnance Survey national grid reference TL 1537 1403 (Fig. 1).

1.4.2 Topography & Geology

The natural topography of the area has been modified by the construction of the golf course. The site lies on the edge of a plateau above the valley of the river and at an elevation of c.123m OD.

The natural soils may have been modified during the works for the golf course, but if the natural soil profile survive, it is likely to comprise the Batcombe Association, namely fine silty soils over plateau drift and clay with flints (Soil Survey 1983, 582a). The underlying solid geology comprises Upper Chalk (BGS, Sheet 239).

1.4.3 Proposed Development

The proposed development comprises the construction of an extension to the existing club house, the laying out of a pedestrian access route and minor planting works (Fig. 3).

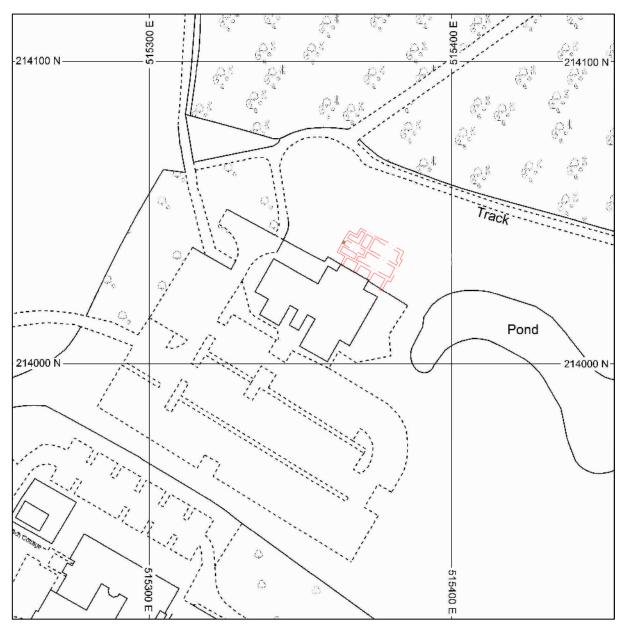


Figure 2: Site plan (scale 1:1250)



Figure 3: Proposed development (new extension in yellow) (not to scale)

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 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.
- Particular attention was to be paid to investigation and recording of the archaeological features identified during the previous archaeological evaluation and watching brief (West 2008)

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), 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 initially carried out according to the project design up to the point where the depth of the over burden caused the implementation of a watching brief strategy. From then of the work was carried out according to ASC's general watching brief methodology.

2.4 Constraints

Originally intended as a strip map and sample investigation, once the depth of the overburden was ascertained it was clear that this would be impractical and a watching brief style of investigation was implemented.

Part of the watching brief included the installation of a gas pipe. Unfortunately this was excavated at a later date without ASC being informed.

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. Aldwickbury and the surrounding area is an area of considerable archaeological and historical interest (Page 1908) and this has recently been defined in the *Wheathampstead and Harpenden Extensive Urban Survey* (Thompson 2002). The site has the potential to reveal evidence of a variety of periods, but the focus of interest is likely to lie in the prehistoric and Roman periods.

This section has been compiled with information from readily available published sources. HER = Historic Environment Record.

3.2 **Prehistoric** (before AD43)

The site lies on a plateau above the valley of the river Lea (Fig. 1). The river valley has attracted settlement since the prehistoric periods but relatively little is known of the higher land above the river in this area. Part of the valley floor, to the north of the site was examined during the archaeological evaluation when a former meander of the river and a scatter of prehistoric flints were recorded (West 2008, 5; fig. 3, plate 1). The nature and extent of prehistoric activity on the plateau is not understood but observations in the area adjacent to the proposed extension revealed a spread of Neolithic flints, and a Bronze Age hearth and pit (*ibid*, fig. 5).

The area was of considerable importance during the Iron Age and a late Iron Age chieftain burial, has been found in the river valley *c*.2km east of the site at Cold Harbour. Settlement in the area during this period was probably dominated by a substantial *oppidum* (defended enclosure) known as the *Devils Dyke* at Wheathampstead, *c*.3km east of the site.

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

During the Roman period, the area lay within the tribal area of the *Catuvellauni*, with its capital at *Verulamium* (St Albans), *c*.6 km south of the site. A range of Roman remains have been recorded in the area, notably a mausoleum at Rothamstead, *c*.2 km south of the site (HER 673), and in the centre of Harpenden, to the north (HER 664, 674, 675, 2886). Roman finds, including a substantial building, are concentrated around Turners Hall Farm, 2km north of the site (HER 9913, 9950, 9956) and the large Roman feature, identified during the initial evaluation lies close to the north side of the site of the proposed building.

3.4 Saxon and Medieval (c.450-1500)

The pattern of settlement in this part of Hertfordshire during the Saxon and medieval period was probably one of scattered farms and hamlets, known as 'Ends' and 'Greens' but the early development of the Aldwickbury area is not well understood. A settlement may have developed in the river valley during the Saxon period. Saxon pottery has been recorded in the river valley and it has been suggested that the present A1081 road may follow the route of a Saxon road (Thompson 2002, fig. 3). The medieval and later settlement of Harpenden subsequently developed in the river valley.

During the medieval period the area lay within the manor of *Piggots* (Page 1971, 309). The early manorial history has been traced from the early 14th century but little is known of the origin of Aldwickbury.

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

The site is shown on the first edition six inch the mile scale Ordnance Survey map, which was published in 1884. A small estate named *Highfers* is depicted to the south of the present golf course (now incorporated into Aldwickbury School) and the majority of the modern land boundaries are depicted on this map. Later editions of the Ordnance Survey map show that little change took place during the 20th century, until the development of the golf course during the early 1990s.

4. **Results**

The footprint of the extension to the club house was stripped of topsoil, (100), comprising dark brown grey friable clay loam. It was c.0.25m in depth overlying a layer of made ground, (101), consisting of mixed mainly mid grey brown firm clay silt including building material and redeposited natural.

The footing trenches were excavated through this layer to a depth of 1.7m adjacent to the existing club house at the top of the slope and reducing to 0.9m in the northern limits (Fig. 3, Plates 1-4). The trenches were c.0.9m wide in the eastern half of the development and c.0.7m in the west.

The made ground (101) had a maximum depth of c.0.9m next to the existing building dropping to c.0.43m in the north. The made ground was overlying natural geology (102) comprising firm mid blue orange clay overlying firm orange clay with frequent flint inclusions.

The only archaeology present was one probable pit, [103], observed to be cutting the natural clay in the trench running along the west of the new extension (Fig. 4, Plate 5). Pit [103] measured 1.90m wide and covered the whole width of the 0.7m wide trench. It extended below the base of the trench and was only excavated to 0.30m in depth. It was filled with a soft mid grey brown clay silt probably deriving from a process of secondary silting (104). Three small sherds of probable early Roman pottery were recovered from this fill, all originating from a single vessel (Plate 6).

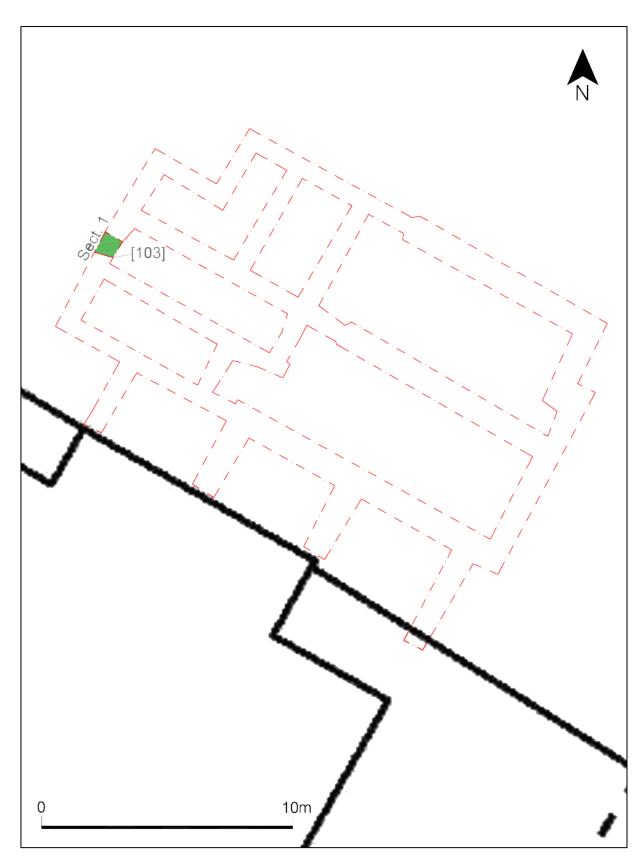


Figure 3: Plan of foundation trenches (1:150)

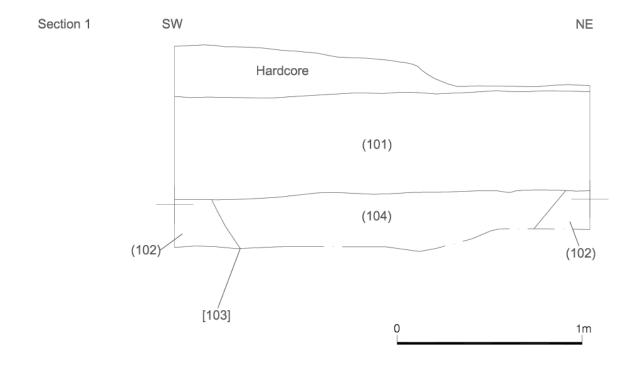


Figure 4: Section including pit [103] (1:20)



Plate 1: Foundation trenches looking southwest



Plate 2: Foundation trenches looking northeast



Plate 3: Trench adjacent to existing club house looking south



Plate 4: Trench section looking north



Plate 5: Trench section over pit [103]



Plate 6: Pottery sherds found in pit [103] (Scale: 10cm)

5. Conclusions

A strip, map and record condition was placed on the construction of an extension to the clubhouse at Aldwickbury Park Golf Club, Hertfordshire. The topsoil strip was archaeologically monitored after which it became evident that the area had been substantially disturbed during the construction of the golf club. A substantial amount of mixed material had been used to build up the area to produce a level platform for the existing club house. No buried topsoil existed below this made ground indicating that the area was machined down during the previous construction work.

Owing to the thick layer of made ground and the steep slope it was deemed impractical to continue with the strip, map and sample strategy and the footing trenches were archaeologically monitored as a watching brief.

One archaeological feature was found comprising a probable pit, (103), in the trench along the northwestern edge of the extension's footprint. This was only partially excavated to a depth of 0.3m three small sherds of pottery were found with a probable early Roman date.

Archaeological excavations took place during the construction of the golf course in 1993 which showed Mesolithic/Early Neolithic activity confined to the valley floor of the River Lea, but later occupation widespread on the valley terraces to the south (West 2008). Features in the immediate vicinity of the new extension include [17] and (18), a Bronze Age pit and a scatter of Neolithic to Bronze Age flint respectively (Fig. 5). Nothing was found within the foundation trenches relating to these features. However, it is likely that pit [103] is contemporaneous with (19), a large area of silting *c*.8m to the north. This contained a scatter of 1st century pottery sherds from a small number of vessels and has been interpreted as the result of flooding (*ibid.*).

This project, although small, shows a continuation of the pattern of the extensive archaeological remains across Aldwickbury Park Golf Club. The weather was good for the length of the archaeological works and a high confidence rating can be assigned to this project.

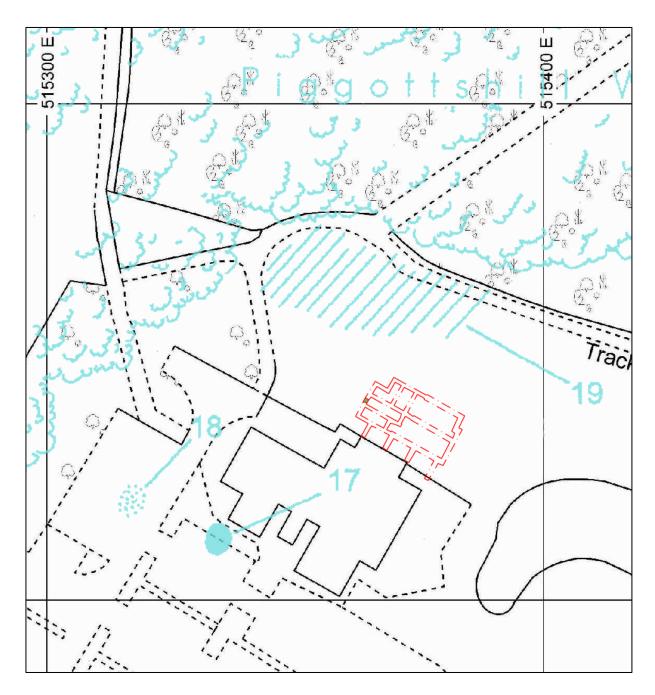


Figure 5: Foundation trenches in relation to the 1993 excavations (West 2008) (1:20)

6. Acknowledgements

The project was commissioned by *Clague LLP* on behalf of *The Burhill Group Ltd*. The writer is grateful to Nigel Bladen for his assistance. The project was monitored by the District Archaeologist on behalf of the local planning authority.

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

7. Archive

- 7.1 The project archive will comprise:
 - 1. Project Design
 - 2. Initial Report
 - 3. Site Monitoring Sheets
 - 4. Finds records
 - 5. Finds
 - 6. Site record drawings
 - 7. List of photographs
 - 8. B/W prints & negatives
 - 9. CDROM with copies of all digital files.
- 7.2 The archive will be deposited with *St Albans Museum*.

8. References

Standards & Specifications

- ALGAO 2003 Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England. East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Paper 14.
- EH 2006 Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment. English Heritage (London).
- Fell 2013 Aldwickbury Park Golf Club, Harpenden, Hertford Project Design for Archaeological Strip,

Map and Sample Excavation on behalf of The Burhill Group ASC Ltd. 1630/APG/1

- 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).

Secondary Sources

BGS British Geological Survey 1:50,000 Series, Solid & Drift Geology.

- Page W (ed), 1971 The Victoria History of the County of Hertfordshire. 2. Dawson of Pall Mall
- Soil Survey 1983 1:250,000 Soil Map of England and Wales, and accompanying legend (Harpenden).
- Thompson I, 2002 *Wheathampstead and Harpenden Extensive Urban Survey*. Hertfordshire County Council
- West S, 2008 'A multi-period landscape at Aldwickbury Golf Course, near Harpenden' in *Hertfordshire Archaeology and History* 15, 5-20

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104	103	pit	3	3				

Appendix 2: Finds Concordance

Appendix 3: List of Photographs

SITE NAME:Aldwickbury Park Golf Club, Harpenden, Hertfordshire SITE NO/CODE:1630APG							
Shot	B&W	Digital	Subj	ect			
1			Topsoil stripping looking northwest				
2			Topsoil stripping looking southwest				
3			Topsoil stripping looking west				
4			Topsoil stripping looking west				
5			Section of trench in southeast corner le	ooking southeast			
6			Foundation trenches looking north				
7			Foundation trenches looking east				
8			Foundation trenches looking north				
9			Foundation trenches looking west				
10			Foundation trenches looking north				
11			Foundation trenches looking south				
12			Foundation trenches looking east				
13			Foundation trenches looking northwest				
14			Foundation trenches looking east				
15			Foundation trenches looking southeast				
16			Section of northern foundation trench lo	poking northeast			
17			Foundation trenches looking west				
18			Excavation of foundation trench looking northwest				
19			Excavation of foundation trench looking	g west			
20			Foundation trenches looking west				
21			Foundation trenches looking east				
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23			Foundation trenches looking south				
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25			Foundation trenches looking southwest	t			
26			Foundation trenches looking north				
27			Foundation trenches looking south				
28			Foundation trenches looking south				
29			Section of foundation trench looking no	rthwest			
30			Section 1 with Pit [103]				
31			Section 1 with Pit [103]				
32			Foundation trenches looking east				
33			Foundation trenches looking east				
34			Foundation trenches looking east				
35			Foundation trenches looking east				
36			Foundation trench looking south				
37			Foundation trench looking south				
38			Foundation trench looking west				
39			Foundation trench looking east				
40			Oblique view of Section 1 looking north				
41			Pottery sherds from (104)				

Appendix 4: ASC OASIS Form

PROJECT DETAILS					
Project Name:	Aldwickbury Park Golf Club, Harp Hertfordshire	·	OASIS reference:	155309	
Short Description:	In November 2013 a strip map and sample excavation was started during the construction of an extension to the club house at Aldwickbury Park Golf Club, Harpenden, Hertfordshire. This was subsequently changed to a watching brief once the gradient and depth of the made ground made it impractical to strip the whole footprint down to natural geology. The foundation trenches were monitored and a single pit was found on the northwestern edge of the extension footprint. This contained three small sherds of Early Roman pottery and is likely to be contemporary with a large area of flood derived silt containing Early Roman pottery which				
	was found c.8m to the north during the original construction of the golf course.				
Project Type:	oject Type: Watching Brief				
Previous work: (eg. SMR refs)			Site status: (eg. none, SAM, listed)	none	
Current land use:	Golf course		Future work: (yes/no/unknown)	no	
Monument type:	-		Monument period:	-	
Significant finds: (artefact type & period)	Pottery early Roman				
PROJECT LOCATION					
County:	Hertfordshire	OS reference: (8 figs min) TL 1537 1403			
Site address: (+ postcode if known)	Aldwickbury Park Golf Club, Harpenden, Hertfordshire				
Study area: (sq. m. / ha)	9200m ²	Height OD: (metres)		126m	
PROJECT CREATORS					
Organisation:	Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd				
Project brief originator:	-	Project design originator:		David Fell	
Project Manager:	David Fell	Director/Supervisor:		Jonathan Hunn	
Sponsor / funding body:	The Burhill Group Ltd				
PROJECT DATE					
Start date:	5 th November 2013	End dat	e:	15 th November 2013	
PROJECT ARCHIVES					
	Location (Accession no.)	Content (eg. pottery, animal bone, files/sheets)			
Physical:	St Albans Museum	Pottery			
Paper:		Project Design, Monitoring Sheets, Section, Report			
Digital:		CD with all digital files			
BIBLIOGRAPHY (Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report)					
Title:	Watching Brief: Aldwickbury Park Golf Club, Harpenden, Hertfordshire				
Serial title & volume:	ASC Ltd Report ref. 1630/APG/2				
Author(s):	Ralph S. Brown				
Page nos	25	Date:		18th February 2014	