

Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd

**WATCHING BRIEF:
WM MORRISON SUPERMARKET
40 BLACK FAN ROAD
WELWYN GARDEN CITY
HERTFORDSHIRE**

on behalf of

Aedas Architects Ltd for Wm Morrison Supermarkets Plc



A J Hancock BSc PgDip

January 2007

ASC: 854/WGC/01

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Site Data

<i>ASC project code:</i>	WGC	<i>ASC Project No:</i>	854
<i>Event No:</i>		<i>Accession No:</i>	
<i>County:</i>	Hertfordshire		
<i>Village/Town:</i>	Welwyn Garden City		
<i>Civil Parish:</i>	Welwyn Garden City		
<i>NGR (to 8 figs):</i>	TL 525606 212780		
<i>Present use:</i>	Loading Area for supermarket		
<i>Planning proposal:</i>	Extension to rear of supermarket loading area		
<i>Planning application ref/date:</i>	N6/2006/489/FP		
<i>Local Planning Authority:</i>	Welwyn & Hatfield		
<i>Date of fieldwork:</i>	16/10/06 – 12/12/06		
<i>Client:</i>	Wm Morrison Supermarkets Plc c/o Aedas Architects Ltd 7 Brewery Place Brewery Wharf Leeds LS10 1NE		
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Internal Quality Check

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<i>Edited/Checked By:</i>		<i>Date:</i>	

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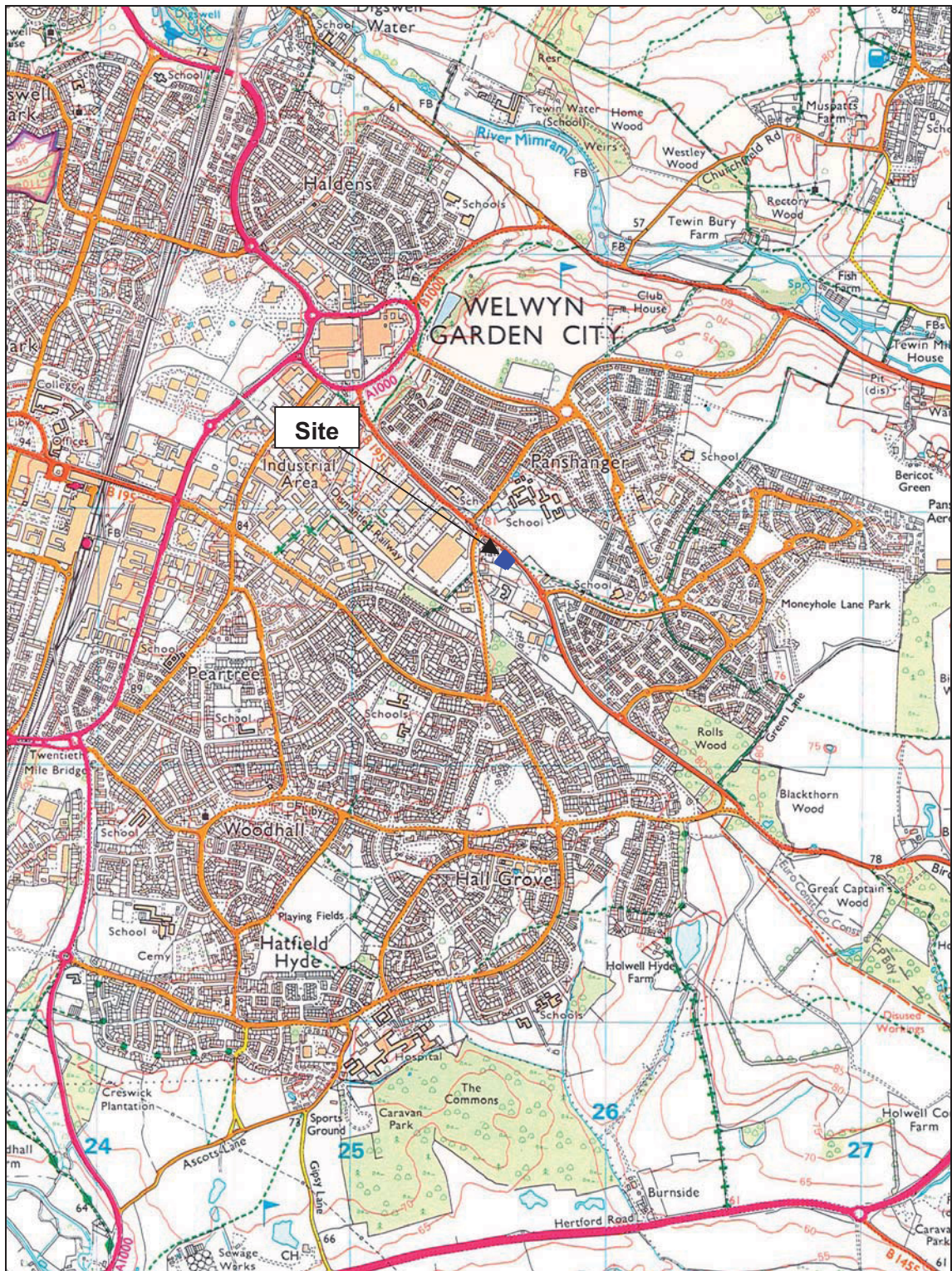


Figure 1: General location (scale 1:25,000)

Summary

During October-December 2006 a watching brief was carried out by ASC Ltd during excavation of footing trenches for an extension to the loading/unloading bays at the rear of Morrisons's supermarket, 40 Black Fan Road, Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire. The trenches revealed that the natural soil profile had been destroyed and an unknown depth of the underlying natural deposit removed during construction of the original supermarket building. No archaeological finds or features were observed during watching brief visits and if any archaeological features were present in this area they would have been destroyed during the construction of the supermarket.

1. Introduction

1.1 In October 2006 *Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd* (ASC) carried out a watching brief at the rear of WM Morrisons Supermarket, 40 Black Fan Road, Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire (NGR TL 525606 212780: Fig. 1). The project was commissioned by *Aedas Ltd* on behalf of *Wm Morrison Supermarkets Plc* and was carried out according to ASC's standard watching brief methodology and IFA guidelines (IFA 2001) after agreement of the scope of the archaeological work with the archaeological advisor (AA), *County Archaeology Office, Hertfordshire County Council* for the local planning authority (LPA), *Welwyn and Hatfield District Council*.

1.2 *Planning Background*

This watching brief was required as a planning condition under the terms of *Planning Policy Guidance Note 16* (PPG16), in response to proposals for the construction of an extension to the loading area at the rear of a Wm Morrison supermarket. The relevant planning application reference is N6/2006/489/FP.

1.3 *Location*

40 Black Fan Road is situated in Panshanger at the north-east of Welwyn Garden City in the district of Welwyn Hatfield, Hertfordshire. The immediate environs of the site form an area of mixed residential/industrial development.

1.4 *Description*

The site formed part of the delivery area adjacent to the unloading/loading bays of the supermarket. A thick concrete slab covered the surface of the area affected by the groundworks and its spatial extent was bounded at the south and east by the supermarket building. The western extent of the groundworks was delimited by two electricity sub-stations immediately west of which lay metal security fencing that also formed the northern perimeter of the delivery area adjacent to Black Fan Road.

1.5 *Geology & Topography*

The site exhibited a slight north-south trending slope and lay at c.80m AOD, some 500m southwest of the Mimram valley. The local geology is classified as glaciofluvial drift, which is the parent material for soils belonging to the Ludford Association (Soil Survey 1983). The soils are well drained, non calcareous, argillic brown earths developed on fine and coarse loamy Head (Hodge *et al* 1984, 237).

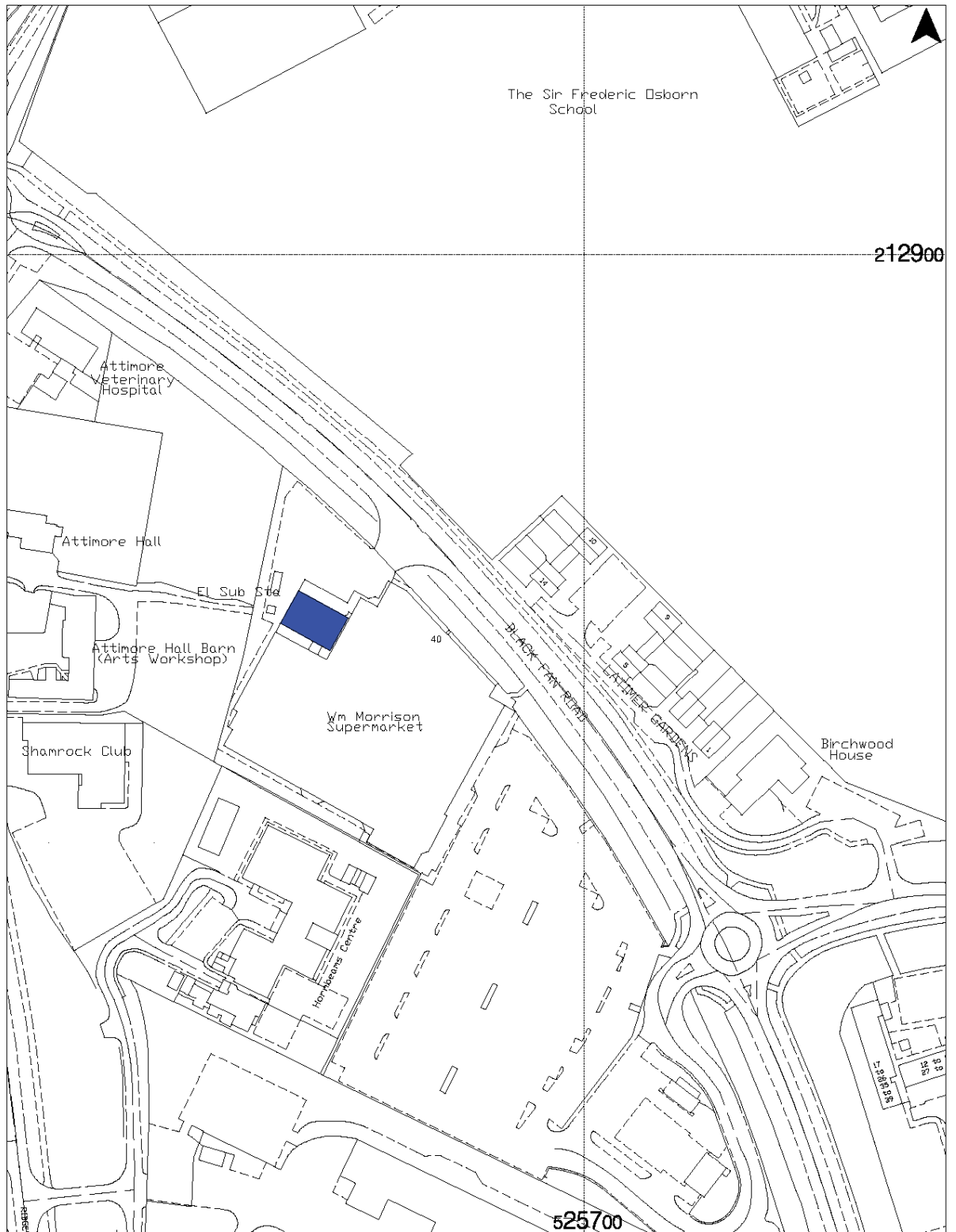


Figure 2: Location of groundworks (scale 1:2000)

2. Aims & Methods

2.1 Aims

The aims of the watching brief were:

- To identify, record and sample any archaeological features revealed by the groundworks with the aim of characterising their form, function and date.

2.2 Standards

The work conformed to the relevant sections of the Institute of Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct* (IFA 2000) and *Standard & Guidance Notes* (IFA 2001), and to the relevant sections of ASC's own *Operations Manual*.

2.3 Methods

The work was carried out according to ASC's standard watching brief methodology, which requires:

- Monitoring by an experienced archaeologist of ground disturbance (eg. footing and service trenches, reduction of levels, landscaping).

2.4 Constraints

No constraints on the watching brief were identified prior to the fieldwork and none were encountered during monitoring visits.

3. Archaeological & Historical Background

The following sections summarise a comprehensive desk-based assessment of Sir Frederic Osborn School, located immediately northwest of the current site, and its environs prepared by ASC for Herts CC in 2003 (Wilcox 2003) and also include the results of more recent fieldwork.

3.1 Prehistoric (before 600BC)

Little is known of prehistoric sites in the Welwyn Garden City area. With the exception of a late Bronze Age axe from Woodhall Lane, nearly 2km south-west of the assessment site (SMR 0642), no sites or finds of pre Iron Age date are recorded in the garden city, although recent studies (Holgate 1995) indicate evidence of prehistoric activity in the upper Mimram valley, north-west of Welwyn.

3.2 Iron Age (600BC-AD43)

In contrast, sites of Iron Age date are well represented in the Welwyn area generally. From a recent regional study (Niblett 1995, 61) it is clear that, during the late pre-Roman Iron Age (LPRIA), the area now encompassing Welwyn and Welwyn Garden City was quite densely settled, and that this thriving community included a particularly rich and influential group of people. Possibly the most significant discovery of this period made in the immediate environs of the site is the Iron Age cemetery and 'Chieftain Burial' located on the Panshanger estate in 1965 (Stead 1967: SMR 2815). The area surrounding this site is designated as *Area of Archaeological Significance* 15 by the CAO. Subsequent observations during house construction in this area (Rook 1970) have revealed much evidence of settlement and related activities of both late pre-Roman Iron Age (LPRIA) and Roman date (SMR 2818, 2819, 2820, 4245, 6416).

3.3 Romano-British (AD43-c.450)

During the Roman period, the Welwyn area fell within the tribal territory (*civitas*) of the *Catuvellauni*, with its capital at *Verulamium* (St Albans). A number of Roman sites have been located in the area, primarily around Welwyn itself, showing that this part of the Mimram valley remained a centre of occupation. As in the late Iron Age, a significant part of the area's occupants appear to have had wealth and influence. Villas have been excavated at Lockleys (Ward Perkins 1938) and Dicket Mead (Rook 1986), and traces of other substantial Roman masonry buildings have been found elsewhere in and around Welwyn (Rook, *op. cit.*). Recently, the remains of a substantial Roman mausoleum and associated inhumation cemetery were excavated at Welwyn Hall (Macdonald, forthcoming). Moving closer to the site, Roman occupation debris and coins have been recovered from Panshanger (SMR 2818, 4252, 6416), and a Roman coin was found at a site in Heronswood Road (SMR 2821). A LPRIA/Roman native settlement at Grubs Barn, discovered by the Lockleys Archaeological Society in the late 1960s (Rook 1970, 31-36), is adjacent to the grounds of Sir Frederic Osborn School. Its full extent and nature have never been fully determined.

3.4 Saxon (c.450-1066)

Very little is known of the Welwyn area during the centuries following the end of the Roman period, and no sites or finds of Saxon date are recorded within the environs of the site. By the later part of the Saxon period, the area fell within the large parish of Hatfield, which was itself part of the Broadwater Hundred (Page 1914, 91). Settlements appear to have existed prior to the Norman Conquest in the neighbouring parishes of Welwyn and Digswell: the principal settlement of Hatfield parish (now Old Hatfield) is some 5km south of the site.

3.5 Medieval (1066-1500)

In the 11th century the manor of Panshanger, to which the site belonged, was given to Geoffrey de Manville by William I (Soissons 1988). The manor passed to William de Melkesope in 1277 and to the Marchioness of Exeter by the 16th century. Her estate was forfeited by Henry VII in 1541 following the execution of her husband and the manor was given to Nicholas Throckmorton. The Panshanger estate later belonged to the Hitchcocks who sold the manor to William Cowper in 1710 (Soissons 1988).

3.6 Post-Medieval (1500-1900)

In 1710 the Panshanger estate was bought by William Cowper, the Lord Chancellor (Soissons 1988; Rook 2001). The 3rd and 5th Earls Cowper purchased more land within the valley of Mimram, including part of the manor of Tewin, which was incorporated into the family seat of Panshanger (Rook 2001; Page 1914). Land at Tewin remained within the Panshanger estate and in the ownership of the Cowper family throughout the 19th century.

3.7 Modern (1900-present)

The estate was inherited by Lord Desborough in 1913 who some sold of it to Ebenezer Howard in 1919 in order to begin construction of Welwyn Garden City. The land on which Sir Frederic Osborn School now stands appears to have remained as largely open agricultural land until shortly after World War II (Rook 2001).

6.8 Recent Archaeological Work

Several archaeological evaluations have been carried out by ASC in recent years immediately north of the current site within the grounds of Sir Frederic Osborn School. In 1999 a watching brief was undertaken during the construction of an extension to the southern end of the school block (Zeepvat 1999). In 2004 a geophysical survey followed by trial trenching was carried out on the playing field at the south-west corner of the grounds (Hunn 2004: Fig. 3). Subsequently the remainder of the playing fields to the south-west of the school were subject to geophysical survey (Hancock 2004) and trial trenches were excavated within the former tennis courts which were located immediately southwest of the school buildings (Crank 2005). No archaeological features or finds were revealed as a result of these investigations.

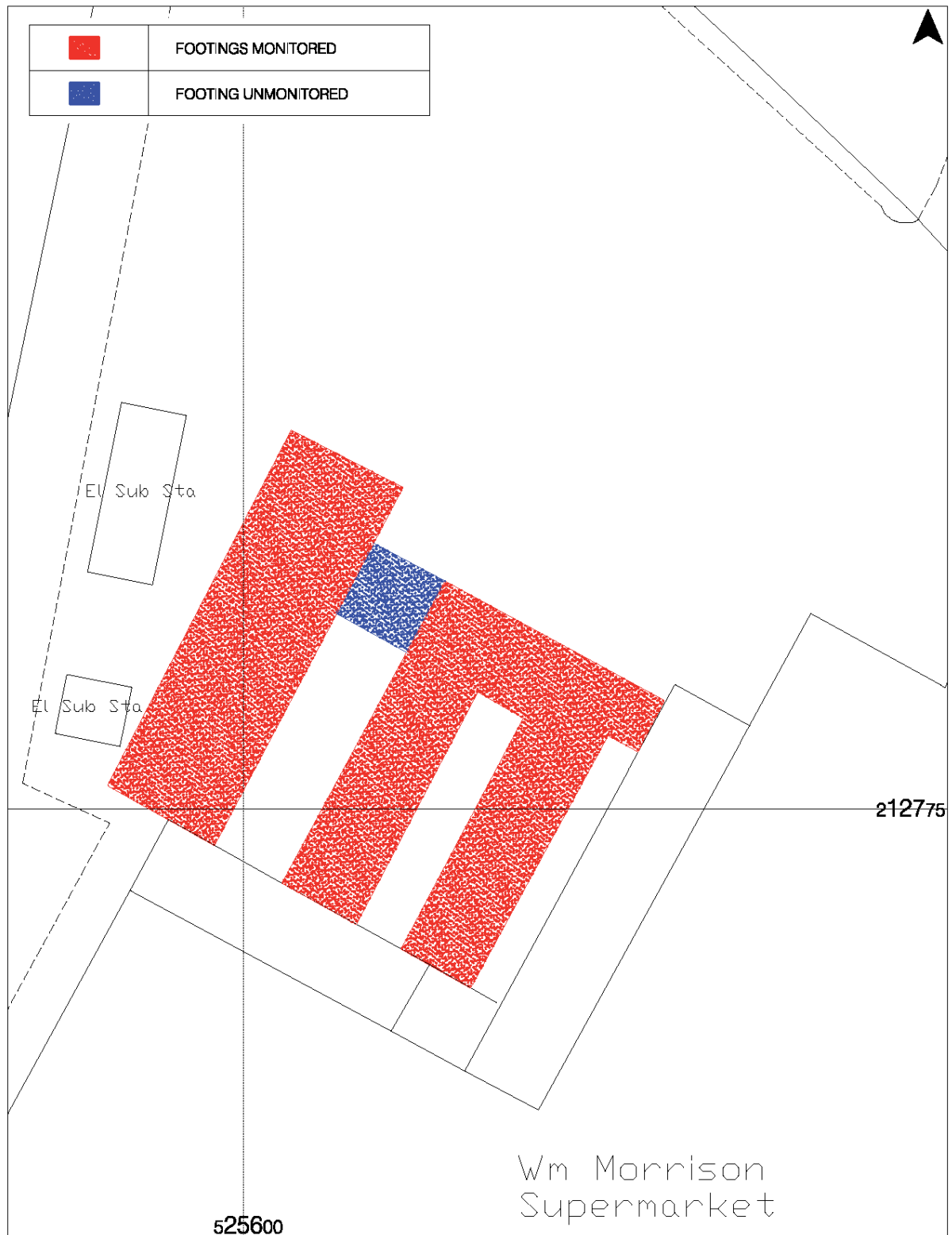


Figure 3: Areas monitored (scale 1:250)

0 15m

4. Results

- 4.1 The groundworks were to occur in three phases commencing in October 2006 and terminating in March 2007. The first and second phases were carried out in October and December 2006 respectively and encompassed *c.*95% of the groundworks subject to the watching brief.
- 4.2 The concrete slab covering the surface of the area of phase one and two groundworks was dislodged with a pneumatic breaker and the slab and underlying deposits were subsequently excavated to a depth of *c.*1.6m by a mini digger equipped with a toothless bucket. Modern service pipes were encountered in all of the footing trenches.
- 4.3 The trenches illustrated that the natural soil profile had been truncated across the area of the extension and showed that made ground directly overlay the natural glaciofluvial orangeish red sandy deposit (Plates 1 and 2). The stratigraphic succession (Plates 3 and 4) across the area of groundworks consisted of:
- 0.3m concrete slab (made ground)
 - 0.1m fine grey aggregate (made ground)
 - layer of blue plastic (made ground)
 - 0.2m mid yellowish brown silty sand (made ground)
 - 0.2m light grey silty sand (made ground)
 - unknown depth of mid orangeish red gravelly sand (natural)
- 4.4 A small hole (Plate 5) was evident in the surface at the base of the central footing trench after it was excavated. Investigation (Plate 6) showed that this small hole opened into a 1.0m wide void that was at least 1.4m deep. The void appeared to be a natural feature formed as a consequence of water erosion.
- 4.5 No archaeological finds or features were observed during watching brief visits made during Phases one and two.
- 4.5 The third phase of groundwork in March 2007 would consist of excavation of a small *c.*5.0m x *c.*4.0m area of footing trench. The negative results of the previous phases combined with the small size and location of this trench (Fig 3) indicated that discovery of archaeological finds or features was extremely unlikely and after agreement with the AA the watching brief was discontinued.



Plate 1: Western footing trench, facing S



Plate 2: Western footing trench, facing NE



Plate 3: Section in western footing trench, facing NW



Plate 4: Section in eastern footing trench, facing SE



Plate 5: Natural solution feature in central footing trench, facing SE



Plate 6: Natural solution feature after investigation, facing SE

5. Conclusions

- 5.1 A high confidence rating is attributed to the observations recorded in the following sections
- 5.2 The stratigraphy observed during the watching brief was severely truncated suggesting that the natural soil profile was removed and the ground level subsequently built up with homogeneous layers of material during construction of the supermarket.
- 5.3 Archaeological work has revealed evidence of Romano-British settlement slightly to the north of the current site although recent evaluations by ASC (Zeepvat 1999, Hunn 2004, Hancock 2005, Crank 2005) immediately northwest in the grounds of Sir Frederic Osborn School have suggested that RB settlement activity did not extend this far south.
- 5.4 The results of the watching brief shed no further light on the southern extent of RB activity as it was impossible to determine whether archaeological features were present until destroyed during construction of the supermarket.

6. Acknowledgements

The author is grateful to Chris Senior of *Aedas Architects Ltd* After excavation, who commissioned this project on behalf of *Wm Morrison Supermarkets Plc*. Thanks also to the Site Manager, Mick Threadkell of *Elmondstone Construction Ltd* for his assistance. The project was monitored by Andy Instone, Planning Archaeologist of Hertfordshire County Council.

The fieldwork was carried out by the author and Mark Winter HND, BSc. The report was edited by Bob Zeepvat BA MIFA.

7. Archive

7.1 The project archive will comprise:

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

7.2 The archive will be deposited with Mill Green Museum.

8. References

Standards & Specifications

IFA 2000a Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct*.

IFA 2001 Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Standard & Guidance documents (Desk-Based Assessments, Watching Briefs, Evaluations, Excavations, Investigation and Recording of Standing Buildings, Finds)*.

Secondary Sources

Crank N 2005 *Archaeological Evaluation: Sir Frederic Osborn School, Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire*. ASC report 723/FOS/02.

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Appendix 1: Monitoring Sheets

 A.S.C. LTD		ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD MONITORING RECORD	
Project: 40 BLACK FAN ROAD		Project No/Code: 854 1 WGC	Sheet: 1 of 1
WELWYN GARDEN CITY		Date of visit: 16/10/06	
Client/Developer			
Contact: MICK THROCKELL (SITE MANAGER)		Phone: 07476 266079	
Duration of Visit (Inc. travel):	Start: 8.45	Finish: 14.00	
Completed by: ASH			
Development Type:			
Footings <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Services	Roads	Leveling
			Quarrying
			Pipelines
			Other (specify):
Site & weather conditions:			
SURFACE OF SITE COVERED BY CONCRETE SLABS			
WEATHER MILD/SUNNY			
Observations:			
INITIAL SITE VISIT TO OBSERVE PROGRESS OF GROUNDWORKS AND MEET WITH SITE MANAGER.			
CONCRETE SLABS OF LOADING AREA BEING BROKEN UP AND REMOVED. NUMEROUS SERVICES PRESENT AND WORK ∴ SLOW. ARTIFICIAL MID REDISH GRAVELLY SAND EVIDENT UNDER CONC. SLABS.			
SITE MANAGER INDICATED REMOVAL OF MADE GROUND AND EXCAVATION OF FOOTING TRENCHES MAY BEGIN THURSDAY 19/10/06.			
GROUNDWORKS TO OCCUR IN THREE PHASES EXTENDING TO C. MARCH 2007 DUE TO NEED FOR ACCESS OF MORRISONS LORRIES TO EXISTANT LOADING/UNLOADING BAYS.			
Comments:			
CONTACT MICK THROCKELL WED/THURS TO INQUIRE ABOUT PROGRESS AND ARRANGE NEXT WB VISIT.			

For sketch plan, use reverse

©ASC, 2003

A.S.C. LTD **ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD MONITORING RECORD**

Project: 40 BLACK FAN ROAD		Project No/Code: 1WGC	Sheet: 2 of
WELWYN GARDEN CITY		Date of visit: 23/10/06	
Client/Developer			
Contact:		Phone:	
Duration of Visit (inc. travel):	Start: 9.30	Finish: 1.30	
Completed by: ASH			
Development Type:			
Footings <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Services	Roads	Levelling
			Quarrying
			Pipelines
			Other (specify):
Site & weather conditions: DELIVERY AREA OF MORRISONS - COVERED WITH CONCRETE SLABS . BRIGHT + MILD			
Observations: PHASE 1 AREA OF LOADING RAMP 80% EXCAVATED . STRAT IS MADE GROUND - EXCEPT (106)			
	(100)	CONC SLAB (c.0.3m)	
	(101)	FINE GREY AGGREGATE (c.0.1m)	
	(102)	BLUE PLASTIC	
MADE GROUND	(103)	BROWN SILTY SAND (c.0.2m)	
	(104)	MID ORANGEISH RED SAND (BROWN) (c.0.1m)	
	(105)	LIGHT GREYISH BROWN GRAVELLY SAND (c.0.2m)	
NAT?	(106)	MID ORANGEISH RED GRAVELLY SAND (c.0.5m)	
STORM DRAINS AND FOUNDATION OF SUPERMARKET PRESENT IN MID ORANGEISH RED GRAVELLY SAND (106) - NO CUTS FOR THESE FEATURES VISIBLE - PROBABLY CONSTRUCTED THEN GRAVELLY SAND REDEPOSITED TO LEVEL AREA PRIOR TO SURFACE DEPOSITS BEING LAID			
Comments: (106) IS SIMILAR TO NATURAL 'HEAD' DEPOSITS OBSERVED IN OTHER WORK BY AS IN LOCAL AREA. THE SUPERFICIAL SURFACE DEPOSITS HAVE BEEN REMOVED AND THE HEAD TRUNCATED. THE LACK OF CUTS FOR SERVICES SUGGESTS THAT THE TRENCHES HAVE BEEN BACKFILLED WITH THE EXCAVATED MATERIAL EXCAVATED FROM THEM. NO ARCHAEOLOGICAL FINDS OR FEATURES OBSERVED.			

For sketch plan, use reverse

©ASC, 2003

P.T.O

NO FURTHER VISITS NECESSARY FOR PHASE 1. PHASE 2 COMMENCES IN JAN/FEB 2007 CONTACT SITE MANAGER IN NEW YEAR TO GET UPDATE ON TIMETABLE



A.S.C. LTD

ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD MONITORING RECORD

Project: <i>Black Fan Road</i>		Project No/Code: <i>1854</i>	Sheet: <i>1</i> of <i>2</i>
<i>Welwyn</i>		Date of visit: <i>12/12/06</i>	
Client/Developer			
Contact:		Phone:	
Duration of Visit (inc. travel):	Start: <i>7.45</i>	Finish: <i>16.15</i>	
Completed by:			
Development Type:			
Footings	Services	Roads	Levelling
			Quarrying
			Pipelines
			Other (specify):
Site & weather conditions: <i>Clear + cold</i>			
Observations: <i>on site - 9.00, off site - 15.45</i> <i>Majority of excavation completed prior to arrival on site</i> <i>no archaeology present just Made up ground beneath concrete surface.</i> <i>Concrete ranges from 0.23m min to ^{1.28m} max</i> <i>Pipe observed at E. edge. - Ceramic + modern</i>			
<p style="text-align: center;"> <i>concrete</i> ↓ <i>0.24M</i> <i>0.06</i> ↓ <i>0.16M</i> ↓ <i>0.26M</i> <i>pipe</i> ↓ <i>0.12M</i> <i>gravel</i> ↓ <i>0.10M</i> <i>orangey red sand + gravel</i> ↓ <i>0.15M</i> </p>			
All descriptions same as over except for addition of Comments: <i>modern size with gravel packing.</i>			
<i>Smaller hole discovered - at least 1.60M deep</i> <i>- void in orangey red sand + gravel layer - no fill</i>			

For sketch plan, use reverse

©ASC, 2003

Appendix 2: List of Photographs

SITE NAME: 40 Black Fan Road, Welwyn Garden City, Hert's.				SITE NO/CODE: 854/WGC
Shot	B&W	Slide	Digital	Subject
1			✓	General site shot
2			✓	Western footing trench, facing S
3			✓	Western footing trench, facing NE
4			✓	Section in western footing trench, facing NW
5	✓		✓	Section in eastern footing trench, facing SE
6	✓		✓	Natural solution feature in central footing trench, facing SE
7	✓		✓	Natural solution feature after investigation, facing SE

Appendix 3: ASC OASIS Form

PROJECT DETAILS						
Project Name:	Watching Brief, 40 Black Fan Road, Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire					
Short Description:	During October-December 2006 a watching brief was carried out by ASC Ltd during excavation of footing trenches for an extension to the loading/unloading bays at the rear of Morrisons's supermarket, 40 Black Fan Road, Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire. The trenches revealed that the natural soil profile had been destroyed and an unknown depth of the underlying natural deposit also removed during construction of the original supermarket building. No archaeological finds or features were observed during watching brief visits and it is likely that if any archaeological features were present in this area they would have been destroyed during the construction of the supermarket.					
Project Type: (indicate all that apply)	DBA	FW	Geophys	Survey	Bldg Rec	Post-Exc
	WB	Strip&Rec	Trenching	Test pits	Exc	Other
Site status: (eg. none, SAM, Listed)	None		Previous work: (eg. SMR refs)		None	
Current land use:	Commercial		Future work: (yes / no / unknown)		None	
Monument type:	None		Monument period:		None	
Significant finds: (artefact type & period)	None					
PROJECT LOCATION						
County:	Hertfordshire		OS reference: (8 figs min)		TL 525606 212780	
District:	Panshanger		Parish:		Welwyn Garden City	
Site address: (with postcode if known)	40 Black Fan Road, Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire					
Study area: (sq. m. or ha)	400 sq m		Height OD: (metres)		c.80m	
PROJECT CREATORS						
Organisation:	Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd					
Project brief originator:	n/a		Project design originator:		n/a	
Project Manager:	Bob Zeepvat		Director/Supervisor:		A J Hancock	
Sponsor / funding body:	Wm Morrison Supermarkets Plc					
PROJECT DATE						
Start date:	16/10/06		End date:		12/12/06	
PROJECT ARCHIVES						
	Location (Accession no.)		Content (eg. pottery, animal bone, files/sheets)			
Physical:	Mill Green Museum		Photo negatives			
Paper:	Mill Green Museum		Monitoring sheets, report			
Digital:	Mill Green Museum		Monitoring sheets, report, illustrations, photos			
BIBLIOGRAPHY (Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report)						
Title:	Watching Brief, 40 Black Fan Road, Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire					
Serial title & volume:	Unpublished client report					
Author(s):	A J Hancock					
Page nos	1-21		Date:		5/01/07	

Appendix 4: SMR Summary Sheet

Site name and address: 40 Black Fan Road Welwyn Garden City Hertfordshire		
County: Hertfordshire		District: Welwyn and Hatfield
Village/Town: Welwyn Garden City		Parish: Welwyn Garden City
Planning application reference: N6/2006/489/FP		
Client name, address, & tel. no: Wm Morrisons Supermarkets Plc c/o Aedas 7 Brewery Place Brewery Wharf Leeds LS10 1NE 0113 3858787		
Nature of application: Extension to supermarket loading area		
Present land use: Loading area		
Size of application area: n/a		Size of area investigated: n/a
NGR (to 8 figures): TL 525606 212780		Site code: 854 WGC
Site director/Organization: Bob Zeepvat / ASC Ltd		
Type of work: Watching brief		
Date of work:	Start: 16/10/06	Finish: 12/12/06
Curating museum: Mill Green Museum		
Related SMR nos: n/a		Periods represented: None
Relevant previous summaries/reports n/a		
Summary of fieldwork results: During October-December 2006 a watching brief was carried out by ASC Ltd during excavation of footing trenches for an extension to the loading/unloading bays at the rear of Morrisons's supermarket, 40 Black Fan Road, Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire. The trenches revealed that the natural soil profile had been destroyed and an unknown depth of the underlying natural deposit also removed during construction of the original supermarket building. No archaeological finds or features were observed during watching brief visits and it is likely that if any archaeological features were present in this area they would have been destroyed during the construction of the supermarket.		
Author: A J Hancock		Date: 5 th Jan 2007