

Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION:
HEMEL HEMPSTEAD SCHOOL
HEMEL HEMPSTEAD
HERTFORDSHIRE**

NGR: TL 0520 0689

on behalf of Mace Ltd



Calli Rouse BA PIFA

April 2008

ASC: 1048/HHS/2

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Site Data

<i>ASC project code:</i>	HHS	<i>ASC project no:</i>	1048
<i>OASIS ref:</i>		<i>Event/Accession no:</i>	
<i>County:</i>	Hertfordshire		
<i>Village/Town:</i>	Hemel Hempstead		
<i>Civil Parish:</i>	Unparished		
<i>NGR (to 8 figs):</i>	TL 0520 0689		
<i>Extent of site:</i>	c.20 x 20m		
<i>Present use:</i>	School		
<i>Planning proposal:</i>	New performance block		
<i>Planning application ref/date:</i>	4/2807-07		
<i>Local Planning Authority:</i>	Dacorum Borough Council		
<i>Date of fieldwork:</i>	26 th March 2008		
<i>Client:</i>	Hertfordshire County Council c/o Mace Ltd Stag House Old London Road Hertford SG13 7YY		
<i>Contact name:</i>	Shweta Acteson		

Internal Quality Check

<i>Primary Author:</i>	Calli Rouse	<i>Date:</i>	07/04/2008
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CONTENTS

Summary.....	4
1. Introduction	4
2. Aims & Methods	8
3. Archaeological & Historical Background	9
4. Results & Conclusions.	10
5. Acknowledgements	13
6. Archive	13
7. References	14

Appendices:

1. Trench Summary Tables.....	15
2. List of Photographs.....	17
3. ASC OASIS Form	18

Figures:

1. General location	3
2. Site plan	6
3. Proposed development plan.....	7
4. Trench 1 section	12

Plates:

Cover: Working shot: trench excavation

1. Trench 1	11
2. Trench 2.....	11
3. Trench 3.....	12



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

Summary

In March 2008 ASC Ltd undertook an archaeological evaluation at Hemel Hempstead School, Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire, in advance of the construction of a new performance block and replacement play area. No archaeological finds or features were observed within any of the trenches, and it is unlikely that the proposed development will have a significant impact on archaeological remains.

1. Introduction

1.1 In March 2008 *Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd* (ASC) carried out an evaluation of land at Hemel Hempstead School, Hertfordshire. The project was commissioned by *Mace Ltd*, acting on behalf of *Hertfordshire County Council*. The work was required under the terms of *Planning Policy Guidance Note 16* (PPG16) by the local planning authority (LPA), *Dacorum Borough Council*, acting on the advice of their archaeological advisor (AA), *Kate Batt* of the *Historic Environment Unit, Hertfordshire County Council*. The planning application reference is 4/2807-07.

1.2 *Planning Background*

This evaluation was required under the terms of *Planning Policy Guidance Note 16* (PPG16), as a condition of planning permission for the development of the site.

1.3 *Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd*

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 Archaeological Organisation* by the Institute of Field Archaeologists, in recognition of its high standards and working practices.

1.4 *Management*

The assessment was managed by **Karin Semmelmann** BA MA AIFA and was carried out under the overall direction of **Bob Zeepvat** BA MIFA.

1.5 *The Site*

1.5.1 *Location & Description*

The site is located in Hemel Hempstead, in the administrative district of Dacorum, Hertfordshire (Figure 1). It is situated in the town centre, to the north of the river Bulbourne and is centred on Ordnance Survey National Grid Reference TL 0520 0689 (Figure 2). The site forms part of the school playing field and is currently marked out as two netball courts. Access will be from the north, via Anchor Lane.

1.5.2 *Geology & Topography*

The soils in the town centre have not been surveyed, but they are likely to comprise the *Hornbeam 2 Association*, namely *deep fine loamy soils over plateau drift* (Soil Survey, 1983, 582c). The underlying geology comprises

cretaceous chalk (BGS, sheet 238). The site is flat and lies at an elevation *c.*100m OD.

1.5.3 *Proposed Development*

The proposed development is for the construction of a new performance block and replacement netball court (Figure 3).

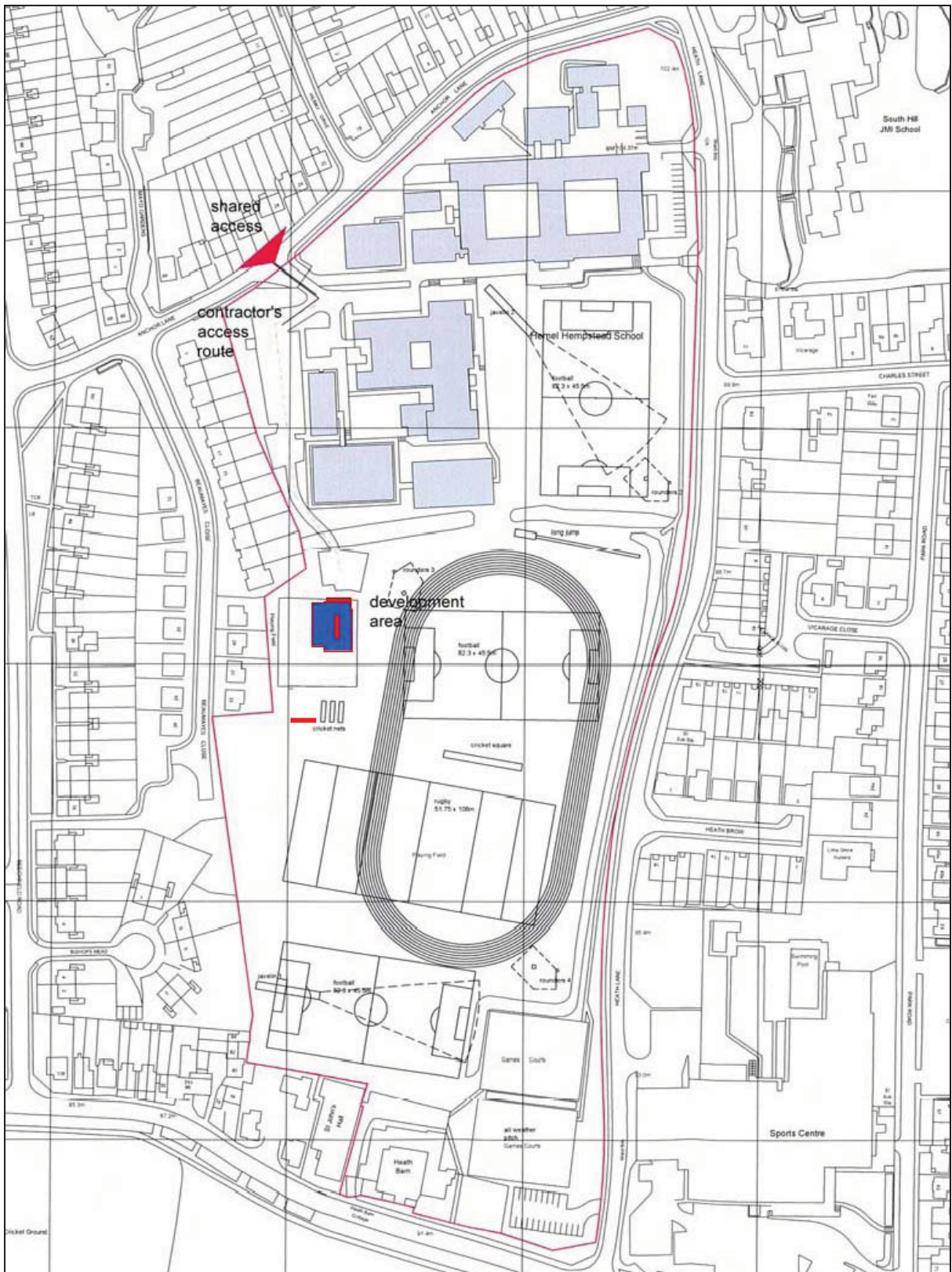


Figure 2: Site plan with trench locations (scale 1:2500)

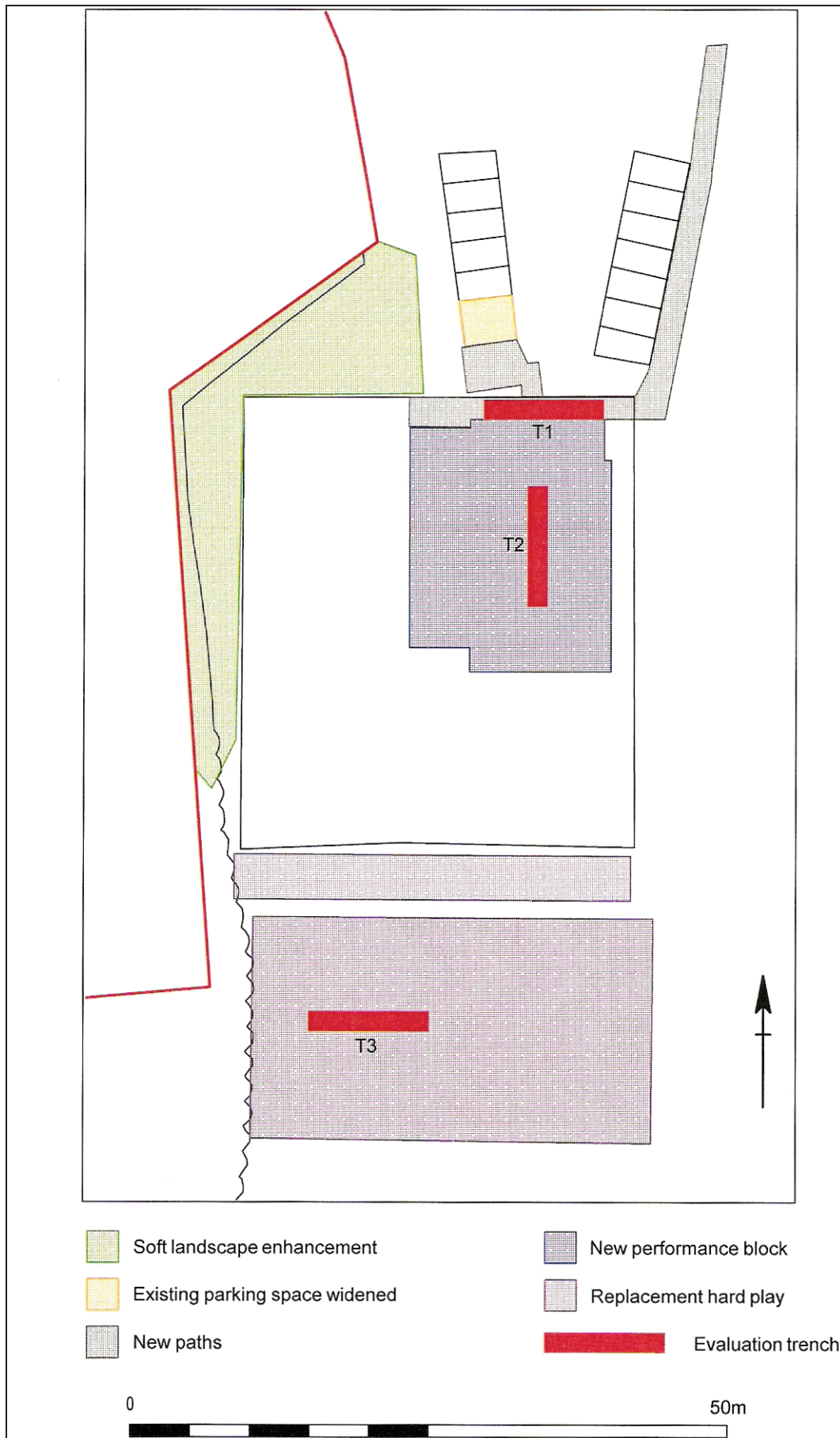


Figure 3: Proposed development plan with trench locations (scale 1:1000)

2. Aims & Methods

2.1 *Aims*

The aims of the evaluation were:

- to establish the date, nature and extent of any archaeological features or deposits on the site
- to establish the integrity and state of preservation of any archaeological features or deposits that may be present

2.2 *Standards*

The work conformed to the project design, to the relevant sections of the Institute of 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 methods to be adopted for this project were:

- Three 10m evaluation trenches to be excavated within the footprint of the proposed block, the new path in front of the block and the new netball court as shown on the trench location plan (Fig. 3)

3. Archaeological & Historical Background

- 3.1 The following section provides a summary of the readily available archaeological and historical background to the site and its environs. Hemel Hempstead is an area of considerable archaeological and historical interest (Hunns 2000; Page 1908), and the site has the potential to reveal evidence of a range of periods.
- 3.2 The following section provides a summary of the readily available archaeological and historical background to the site and its environs. Hemel Hempstead is an area of considerable archaeological and historical interest (Hunns 2000; Page 1908), and the site has the potential to reveal evidence of a range of periods.
- 3.3 The origin of Hemel Hempstead is not understood in detail and there is little evidence for early prehistoric activity in the area. During the Iron Age the area lay within the territory of the *Catuvellauni* and a number of sites of this period are known within the valley of the river Bulbourne.
- 3.4 During the Roman period the region comprised the *civitas* of the *Catuvellauni* (Branigan 1987), which had its capital at *Verulamium* (St Albans). There is now an increasing amount of evidence for Roman settlement in the area, including a major villa at Boxmoor c.2km southwest of the site (Neale D .S 1976).
- 3.5 There is no evidence for Saxon settlement in the area but Hemel Hempstead may have originated during this period and it formed part of the Saxon hundred of *Dacorun*. The place-name may derive from an Old English word meaning ‘homestead of the *Hæmele*’, the *Hæmele* being the Saxon tribe occupying the area (Gover *et al* 1938, 40). At the time of the Domesday Survey (1086) the land in the area was held by the *Count of Mortain* (Morris 1976, 15/10).
- 3.6 The modern town of Hemel Hempstead developed from the 12th century when a planned town was laid out. It was centred on the High Street and Queensway c.0.5km northeast of the site (Hunns 2000, fig. 3). The town grew in prosperity and the medieval settlement was dominated by the church of St Mary (Buteaux 1997, 22; Pevsner & Cherry 2002, 177). The town received borough status in 1539 (Page 1908, 217).
- 3.7 The site lies beyond the west boundary of the medieval settlement and probably remained open ground until the construction of the school during the mid 20th century.

4 Results and Conclusions

4.1 Detailed information regarding the trial trenches and their contents appears in Appendix 1.

4.2 Three 10m trenches were excavated within the footprint of the proposed development. Trenches 1 and 2 were cut through the tarmac of an existing netball court, while Trench 3 was cut into the surrounding playing field to the south.

4.3 *Trenches 1 and 2*

The tarmac (100, 200) was between 0.05m and 0.1m thick, and it overlay a 0.2m thick layer of sandy rubble in both trenches (101, 201). Below the rubble was a subsoil layer comprising firm orange brown clay with frequent flint nodules, which was between 0.1m and 0.3m thick (102, 202). In both trenches 1 and 2 the natural soils comprised firm orange clay with frequent flint and chalk patches (103, 203). No archaeological features were observed within these trenches.

4.4 *Trench 3*

Trench 3 comprised 0.2m of topsoil, which consisted of mid orange brown sandy silt (300). This overlay 0.25m of mid grey brown silty loam with occasional pieces of brick and some stone (301). Below this was the natural subsoil, which comprised a mid orange clay which contained frequent flints (302). Archaeological features not observed in Trench 3.

4.5 *Conclusions*

Significant archaeological features were not observed in the trenches. While the existence of individual isolated archaeological features away from the trenches cannot be specifically excluded, it is unlikely that large numbers of archaeological features were present on the site. It is unlikely that the proposed development will have a significant impact on archaeological remains.

4.6 *Confidence Rating*

The evaluation was undertaken in clear conditions, and full cooperation was received from all parties involved. As a result, a high confidence rating is attached to the evaluation.



Plate 1: Trench 1, looking west, 1m scale



Plate 2: Trench 2, looking north, 1m scale



Plate 3: Trench 3, looking west, 1m scale

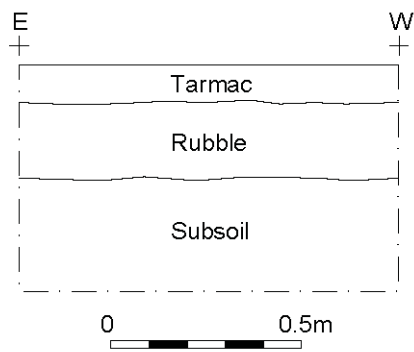


Figure 4: Typical section in Trench 1 showing soil profile
(scale 1:20)

6. Acknowledgements

The evaluation was commissioned by *Mace Ltd*, acting on behalf of *Hertfordshire County Council*. The writer is grateful to Shweta Acteson of *Mace Ltd* for her assistance. The project was monitored by Kate Batt on behalf of the local planning authority. Thanks are also due to Lynch Plant Hire for providing the machinery.

The project was managed for ASC by Karin Semmelmann MA AIFA. Fieldwork was carried out by Martin Cuthbert BA and Calli Rouse BA PIFA. The report was prepared by Calli Rouse and edited by David Fell MA MIFA.

7. Archive

7.1 The project archive will comprise:

1. Brief
2. Project Design
3. Initial Report
4. Clients site plans
5. Site records
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 Dacroum Heritage Trust

8. References

Standards & Specifications

- ALGAO 2003 *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England*. East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Paper **14**.
- Barclay C 2008 *Project design for an Archaeological Evaluation at Hemel Hempstead School, Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire* ASC/1048/HHS/1
- EH 1991 *The Management of Archaeological Projects*, 2nd edition. English Heritage (London).
- 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


- BGS *British Geological Survey 1:50,000 Series, Solid & Drift Geology*.
- Branigan K, 1987 *The Catuvellauni*. Peoples of Roman Britain. Alan Sutton
- Buteaux, E. 1997: St Mary's Church, Hemel Hempstead: a little known Norman church. *Hertfordshire's Past*. **42**, 21-27.
- Gover, J.E.B., Mawer, A. and Stenton, F. M. 1970: *The Place-Names of Hertfordshire*. English Place-Name Society **15**. Cambridge University Press. Cambridge.
- Hunns T, 2000 *Hemel Hempstead Extensive Urban Survey. Assessment Report*. Herts County Council
- Morris, J. 1976: *Domesday Book: Hertfordshire Hertfordshire*. History from the Sources. Phillimore.
- Neale D S 1976 'Northchurch, Boxmoor and Hemel Hempstead Station: the Excavation of three Roman Buildings in the Bulbourne Valley **4**, 1-135
- Page, W. 1908: *The Victoria County History of Hertfordshire*. Dawsons of Pall Mall.
- Pevsner, N. and Cherry, B. 2002: *The Buildings of England: Hertfordshire*. Yale.
- Soil Survey 1983 *1:250,000 Soil Map of England and Wales, and accompanying legend*

Appendix 4: ASC OASIS Form


PROJECT DETAILS			
Project Name:	Hemel Hempstead School, Hertfordshire		
Short Description:	<i>In March 2008 ASC Ltd undertook an archaeological evaluation at Hemel Hempstead School, Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire, in advance of the construction of a new performance block and replacement play area. No archaeological finds or features were observed within any of the trenches, and it is unlikely that the proposed development will have a significant impact on archaeological remains.</i>		
Project Type: (indicate all that apply)	Trial Trenching		
Site status: (eg. none, SAM, Listed)	-	Previous work: (eg. SMR refs)	-
Current land use:	School playing field	Future work: (yes / no / unknown)	No
Monument type:	-	Monument period:	-
Significant finds: (artefact type & period)	-		
PROJECT LOCATION			
County:	Hertfordshire	OS reference: (8 figs min)	TL 0520 0689
Site address: (with postcode if known)	Hemel Hempstead School		
Study area: (sq. m. or ha)	400sq.m	Height OD: (metres)	c.100
PROJECT CREATORS			
Organisation:	Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd		
Project brief originator:	-	Project design originator:	C. Barclay
Project Manager:	R. Zeepvat	Director/Supervisor:	C. Rouse
Sponsor / funding body:	Mace Ltd		
PROJECT DATE			
Start date:	25/03/08	End date:	25/03/08
PROJECT ARCHIVES			
	Location (Accession no.)	Content (eg. pottery, animal bone, files/sheets)	
Physical:	Dacorum Heritage Trust	-	
Paper:		Archive box	
Digital:		CD	
BIBLIOGRAPHY (Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report)			
Title:	Archaeological Evaluation: Hemel Hempstead School Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire		
Serial title & volume:	ASC Ltd Report ref. 1048/HHS/2		
Author(s):	Calli Rouse BA PIFA		
Page nos	18	Date:	07/04/2008


Appendix 3: List of Photographs

SITE NAME: Hemel Hempstead School, Hemel Hempstead, Herts		SITE NO/CODE: 1048/HHS	
Shot	B&W	Digital	Subject
1			Working shot, looking south
2			Trench 1, looking west, 1m scale
3			Trench 1, looking west, 1m scale
4			Trench 2, looking north, 1m scale
5			Trench 2, looking north, 1m scale
6			Trench 2, looking north, 1m scale
7			Trench 2, west facing section, 1m scale
8			Trench 3, looking west, 1m scale
9			Trench3, south facing section, 1m scale

Trench 3						
	Max Dimensions (m)					
	Length	10	Width	1.6	Depth	0.5
	Levels					
	Trench base east		99.38m OD			
	Trench top east		99.94m OD			
	Trench base west		99.41m OD			
	Trench top west		99.85m OD			
	NGR Co-ordinates					
	W	TL 05001 06477		E	TL 05011 06477	
	Orientation			E-W		
Reason for Trench			Within footprint of proposed development			
Context	Type	Description and Interpretation	Width (max: mm)	Thickness (max: mm)	Depth (BGL: mm)	
300	Layer	Mid orange brown sandy silt – Topsoil	1600	200	-	
301	Layer	Mid grey brown silty loam with frequent stone and occasional brick inclusions – Subsoil	1600	250	200	
302	Layer	Mid orange clay with frequent flints	1600	50	450	

Appendix 1: Trench Summary Tables

Trench 1						
	Max Dimensions (m)					
	Length	10	Width	1.6	Depth	0.6
	Levels					
	Trench base east			101.23m OD		
	Trench top east			101.96m OD		
	Trench base west			101.34m OD		
	Trench top west			101.93m OD		
	NGR Co-ordinates					
	W	TL 05016 06527		E	TL 05026 06527	
	Orientation			E-W		
Reason for Trench			Within footprint of proposed development			
Context	Type	Description and Interpretation	Width (max: mm)	Thickness (max: mm)	Depth (BGL: mm)	
100	Layer	Tarmac	1600	100	-	
101	Layer	Sand and rubble – Made-up ground	1600	200	100	
102	Layer	Orange brown firm clay with frequent flint nodules - Subsoil	1600	300	300	
103	Layer	Chalk nodules with orange clay lenses and frequent flint – Natural strata	1600	-	600	

Trench 2						
	Max Dimensions (m)					
	Length	10	Width	1.6	Depth	0.4
	Levels					
	Trench base north			101.32m OD		
	Trench top north			101.8m OD		
	Trench base south			101.27m OD		
	Trench top south			101.61m OD		
	NGR Co-ordinates					
	N	TL 05020 06521		S	TL 05020 06511	
	Orientation			N-S		
Reason for Trench			Within footprint of proposed development			
Context	Type	Description and Interpretation	Width (max: mm)	Thickness (max: mm)	Depth (BGL: mm)	
200	Layer	Tarmac	1600	50	-	
201	Layer	Sand and rubble – Made-up ground	1600	200	50	
202	Layer	Orange brown firm clay with frequent flint nodules - Subsoil	1600	100	250	
203	Layer	Firm orange clay with frequent flint and chalk patches – Natural strata	1600	50	350	