

Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd

**WATCHING BRIEF:
WATTON-AT-STONE PRIMARY SCHOOL
WATTON-AT-STONE
HERTFORDSHIRE**

on behalf of Hertfordshire County Council



J Richards BA PIFA

January 2008

ASC: 996/WAS/2

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Site Data

| | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|------------------------|-----|
| <i>ASC project code:</i> | WAS | <i>ASC Project No:</i> | 996 |
| <i>Event No:</i> | | <i>Accession No:</i> | |
| <i>County:</i> | Hertfordshire | | |
| <i>Village/Town:</i> | Watton-at-Stone | | |
| <i>Civil Parish:</i> | Watton-at-Stone | | |
| <i>NGR (to 8 figs):</i> | TL 2997 1912 | | |
| <i>Present use:</i> | School | | |
| <i>Planning proposal:</i> | Extension to existing building | | |
| <i>Planning application ref/date:</i> | Unknown | | |
| <i>Local Planning Authority:</i> | East Hertfordshire District Council | | |
| <i>Date of fieldwork:</i> | 16 th November to 5 th December 2007 | | |
| <i>Client:</i> | Hertfordshire County Council c/o Mace Limited Stag House Old London Road Hertford SG13 7YY | | |
| <i>Contact name:</i> | Ben Wheeler (Mace Ltd.) | | |

Internal Quality Check

| | | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------|--------------|------------------------------|
| <i>Primary Author:</i> | J Richards BA PIFA | <i>Date:</i> | 7 th January 2008 |
| <i>Revisions:</i> | | <i>Date:</i> | |
| <i>Edited/Checked By:</i> | | <i>Date:</i> | |

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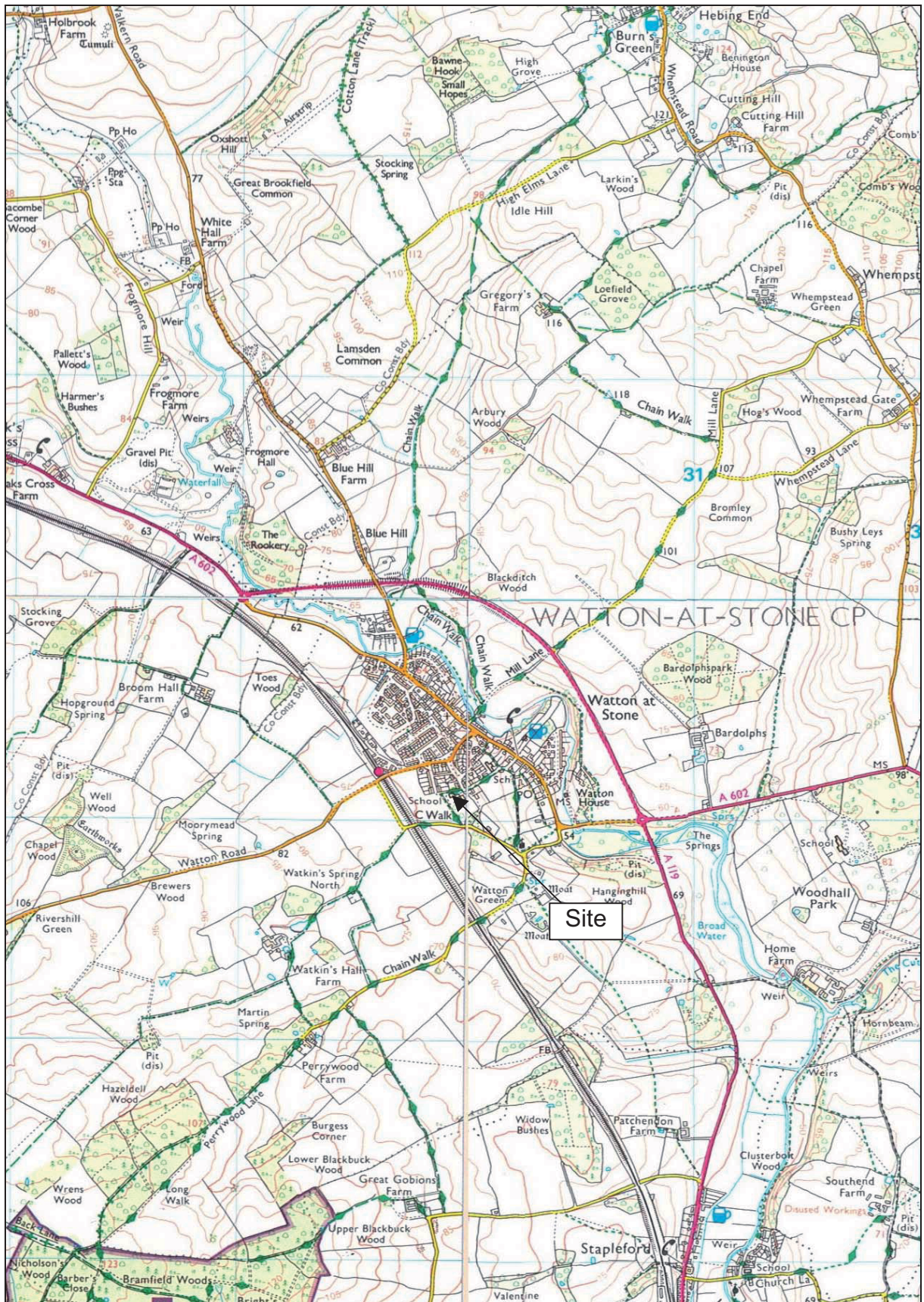


Figure 1: General location (scale 1:25,000)

Summary

During November and December 2007 Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd conducted a watching brief at Watton-At-Stone Primary School during groundworks for an extension to the existing school building. No archaeological features or remains were observed during this watching brief.

1 Introduction

1.1 In November and December 2007 *Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd* (ASC) carried out a watching brief at Watton-At-Stone Primary School (NGR TL 2997 1912: Fig. 1). The project was commissioned by *Mace Ltd* on behalf of *Hertfordshire County Council*, and was carried out according to a brief (Instone 2007) prepared on behalf of the local planning authority (LPA), *East Hertfordshire District Council*, by their archaeological advisor (AA), the *Historic Environment Unit* of *Hertfordshire County Council*, and a project design prepared by ASC.

1.2 *Planning Background*

This watching brief has been 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 existing school building.

1.3 *Location*

The site is situated in the village of Watton-at-Stone, in the administrative district of East Hertfordshire (Fig. 1). It lies in the southeast part of the village in the grounds of the primary school, and is centred on NGR TL 2997 1912 (Fig. 2).

1.4 *Description*

The site is currently part of the school grounds, accessed via Rectory Lane. It comprises an approximately rectangular area of c.750 square metres, to the east of the existing school building.

1.5 *Geology & Topography*

The soils of the area comprise the Hanslope Association, which consists of “*Slowly permeable calcareous clayey soils. Some slowly permeable non-calcareous clayey soils. Slight risk of water erosion.*” This overlies a geological base of chalky till (Soil Survey 1983; 411d). It lies at a height of c.75m OD.



Figure 2: Site plan, showing area of watching brief in blue (scale 1:2500)

2 Aims & Methods

2.1 Aims

As described in the brief (Section 1), 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 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 work was carried out according to the brief (Section 3), which required:

- Soil and overburden stripping, followed by sub-soil stripping when appropriate, under archaeological supervision
- Inspection of sub-soil deposits for archaeological features
- Investigation and recording of any archaeological features/deposits
- Examination of any service and foundation trenches and recording of any exposed archaeological deposits
- Examination of spoil-heaps

3 Archaeological & Historical Background

- 3.1 The application area lies within an area of considerable archaeological importance and lies adjacent to Area of Archaeological Significance 126. The application area has the potential to produce archaeological evidence of a variety of periods, although the Roman and medieval periods are likely to be the focus of interest.
- 3.2 A number of prehistoric sites are situated in the area, notably two Bronze Age ring ditches (burial mounds), c.600m northwest of the application area. The area was of importance during the Roman period and a major Roman road, leading from *Verulamium* (St Albans) to *Camulodunum* (Colchester) passed c.200m north of the application area (Margary 1955, Road 21a). A variety of enclosures and trackways are present in the area, and indicate the presence of an extensive site, of probable Iron Age or Roman date, on the west side of the town. A major double ditched trackway, provisionally dated to the Roman period was situated to the west of the application area and may have continued to the east, in the direction of the site. Floor surfaces and finds relating to a Roman building to the southeast of the site were found in the Vicarage grounds in 1957.
- 3.3 Watton-at-Stone probably developed during the Saxon period and the town is mentioned in the Domesday Book (1086) where it is referred to as *Watone* and *Wodtone*. The landowners were the King, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Westminster Abbey and Count Alan. The land comprised 10 hides and was valued at £9 (Morris 1976). The parish church is dedicated to St Andrew and St Mary and is situated towards the southern end of the village. The earliest architectural features date to the 13th century, although much of the church was rebuilt during the 15th century (VCH III, 163; Pevsner & Cherry 1977). A variety of other medieval buildings are located in the area, including farmhouses at Watton Place, and Broom Hall (VCH III, 158).
- 3.4 The site lies on the periphery of the area of medieval settlement, and remains of that date may be found in the grounds of the primary school.

4 Results

- 4.1 Five site visits were made between 16th October and 6th December 2007. All footings trenches and one of the service trenches were monitored. Trenches were dug with a mechanical excavator with a 0.60m wide toothed bucket.

- 4.2 The trenches revealed that a layer of topsoil 0.30m thick overlay the mid orangey brown silty clay subsoil. The subsoil layer was 0.45m thick and overlay the natural strata, a very stiff, dark orangey brown silty clay with frequent inclusions of large flint nodules. Where the service trench crossed the former footpath it was noted that the concrete slabs of the path sat on a layer of sand 0.20m thick, and that the path had been cut into the topsoil. No archaeological features or finds were observed.



Plate 1: Service trench showing layer of sand below concrete paving



Plate 2: Service trenches



Plate 3: Section of footings trench



Plate 4: Overview of footings trenches

5. Conclusions

- 5.1 No archaeological remains of any date were observed during the course of the watching brief. It is possible that, as the site is known to have been on the periphery of the medieval settlement, this area had not been settled in the medieval period.
- 5.2 A double ditched trackway, provisionally dated to the Roman period was thought to extend eastwards from a site to the west of the school in the direction of the development site. Either this trackway did not extend into the school grounds or it was destroyed during the construction of the existing school building.
- 5.3 *Confidence Rating*
Full co-operation was received from *Mace Ltd*, and conditions for the watching brief were good. All footings trenches and service trenches were monitored and a high confidence rating is therefore attached to the results of this watching brief.

6. Acknowledgements

The writer is grateful to *Mace Ltd* for commissioning this watching brief and to *Hertfordshire County Council* for funding it. The curatorial advice of Andy Instone is also acknowledged.

The watching brief was conducted on behalf of ASC by Jenny Richards BA PIFA, with assistance from Chris Swain, Jonathan Hunn BA PhD MIFA, and Karin Semmelmann MA AIFA. The report was written by Jenny Richards 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 Monitoring Sheets
6. List of photographs
7. B/W prints & negatives
8. CDROM with copies of all digital files.

7.2 The archive will be deposited with *Hertford Museum*.

8. 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).
- IFA 2000a Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct*.
- IFA 2000b Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Code of Approved Practice for the Regulation of Contractual Arrangements in Field Archaeology*.
- IFA 2001 Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Standard & Guidance documents (Desk-Based Assessments, Watching Briefs, Evaluations, Excavations, Investigation and Recording of Standing Buildings, Finds)*.
- Instone A 2007 *Design Brief for Archaeological Monitoring and Recording: Watton-at-Stone Primary School* Historic Environment Unit Hertfordshire County Council

Secondary Sources

- Margary I D 1955 *Roman Roads in Britain*. Phoenix House
- Morris J 1976 *The Domesday Book. Hertfordshire*. Phillimore
- Pevsner N & Cherry B 1977 *The Buildings of England: Hertfordshire* Yale University Press London
- Soil Survey 1983 *1:250,000 Soil Map of England and Wales, and accompanying legend* (Harpenden).
- VCH 1912 *The Victoria County History of Hertfordshire*, vol III, edited by W Page, reprinted 1971

Appendix 1: Monitoring Sheets

| A.S.C. LTD | | ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD MONITORING RECORD | | | | |
|---|---|--|-----------|-----------------|-----------|------------------|
| Project: Watton - at Stone Primary | | Project No/Code: 996 / WAS | | Sheet: of | | |
| | | Date of visit: 16.10.07 | | | | |
| Client/Developer | | | | | | |
| Contact: | | | Phone: | | | |
| Duration of Visit (inc. travel): | | Start: 1130 | | Finish: 1200 | | |
| Completed by: RS | | | | | | |
| Development Type: | | | | | | |
| Footings | Services <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Roads | Levelling | Quarrying | Pipelines | Other (specify): |
| Site & weather conditions: cloudy + slight rain | | | | | | |
| Observations: Two service trenches: 86cm dx 95cm W Topsoil (30cm) over orange-brown clay with flint (very hard clay + large + frequent flint). Number of services crossing trench at both end Trench to be completed by the end of the day | | | | | | |
| Comments: Further service trenches to be dug to divert existing services prior to school extension being built (start date - early November) Next visit before 2am 17th Oct. | | | | | | |

For sketch plan, use reverse

©ASC, 2003



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ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD MONITORING RECORD

| | | | | | |
|--|--|--------------------------|-----------|--------------|-----------|
| Project: WATTON-AT-STONE | | Project No/Code: 996/WAS | | Sheet: of | |
| PRIMARY SCHOOL. | | Date of visit: 18/10/07. | | | |
| Client/Developer: MACE LIMITED. | | | | | |
| Contact: BEN WHEELER. | | | Phone: | | |
| Duration of Visit (inc. travel): | | Start: 11:00. | | Finish: 3:00 | |
| Completed by: <i>[Signature]</i> | | | | | |
| Development Type: | | | | | |
| Footings | Services <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Roads | Levelling | Quarrying | Pipelines |
| Other (specify): | | | | | |
| Site & weather conditions: SCHOOL GROUNDS, DRY + BRIGHT. | | | | | |
| Observations: | | | | | |
| MONITORED EXCAVATION OF THE SERVICE TRENCH (FW) FROM NE TO SW. SEE PLAN OVERLEAF. | | | | | |
| 1.50m wide footpath of 5cm thick concrete slabs overlying 0.30m of ^{coarse} yellow sand cut into tiles . Sand overlies dark orangey brown clay with very large (lint nodules)*/(boulders clay nodular strata), excavated to a depth of 0.10m below ground surface. | | | | | |
| Topsoil 0.25m deep at max; 0.10m deep min (by tree). Large tree next to service trench - roots throughout trench. | | | | | |
| Existing drain trench observed, plastic pipe in yellow sand backfill with rubble. | | | | | |
| Topsoil/Natural strata interface is diffuse | | | | | |
| Comments: | | | | | |
| PIPE TRENCH FOR SURFACE WATER (SEE OVER) WILL BE DUG AT SAME TIME AS FOOTINGS (C. 4 WKS TIME). | | | | | |
| LIAISE WITH CLIENTS FOR NEXT VISIT. | | | | | |
| 2 DIGI, 3 B/W (ONE VOID) PHOTOS OF TRENCH, PLUS 3 DIGITS & CONSTRAINTS. | | | | | |

+ occ brick frags. (LBE).
* canal s. with chunk frags

For sketch plan, use reverse

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD MONITORING RECORD

| | | | |
|---|-------------|-------------------------|---|
| Project: Watton at Stone Primary School. | | Project No/Code: 996 1 | Sheet: 2 of |
| | | Date of visit: 27/11/07 | |
| Client/Developer: Tate (Herts C.C.) | | | |
| Contact: Joe Quinn | | Phone: 07917-899237 | |
| Duration of Visit (inc. travel): | Start: 1.30 | Finish: 2.15 | |
| Completed by: JRA | | | |
| Development Type: | | | |
| Footings | Services | Roads | Levelling <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| | | | Quarrying |
| | | | Pipelines |
| | | | Other (specify): |
| Site & weather conditions: Dull & foggy. | | | |
| Observations: Dropped dig to check up on progress. The area was still being prepared for construction. | | | |
| Comments: The foundation will be dug next Monday (Duc 3") and should be ready midday / early afternoon. Concrete arriving on Tuesday morning. | | | |

For sketch plan, use reverse

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD MONITORING RECORD

| | | | |
|---|----------------|-------------------------------|------------------|
| Project: WATTON AT STONE | | Project No/Code: 996 / WAS | Sheet: of |
| PRIMARY SCHOOL. | | Date of visit: 6/12/07. | |
| Client/Developer MACE. | | | |
| Contact: BEN WHEELER | | Phone: | |
| Duration of Visit (inc. travel): | Start: 8:15 | Finish: 12:00 | |
| Completed by: SR. | | | |
| Development Type: | | | |
| Footings <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Services | Roads | Levelling |
| | | | Quarrying |
| | | | Pipelines |
| | | | Other (specify): |
| Site & weather conditions: WET, RAINING. | | | |
| Observations: | | | |
| TOP SOIL HAD BEEN REMOVED; AND ^{SITE} TRACKED OVER | | | |
| ALL FOOTINGS TRENCHES DUG. NO ARCHAEOLOGY OBSERVED. | | | |
| TWO SMALL (600mm x 600mm) POST PITS WILL BE DUG ON MONDAY. IMPACT OF THESE WILL BE MINIMAL AS THEY WILL NOT BE DEEPER THAN THE SUBSOIL HORIZON. | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| Comments: | | | |
| NO FURTHER VISITS NECESSARY. | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |

For sketch plan, use reverse

©ASC, 2003

Appendix 2: List of Photographs

| SITE NAME: Watton-at-Stone School | | | SITE NO/CODE: 996/WAS |
|-----------------------------------|-----|---------|-------------------------------|
| Shot | B&W | Digital | Subject |
| 1 | √ | √ | Service trench |
| 2 | √ | √ | Service trench |
| 3 | √ | √ | Service trench under paving |
| 4 | √ | √ | Service trench under paving |
| 5 | √ | √ | Service trench under paving |
| 6 | | √ | Working shot |
| 7 | | √ | Working shot |
| 8 | √ | √ | Service trench |
| 9 | | √ | Working shot |
| 10 | √ | √ | Service trench |
| 11 | | √ | Service trench wide |
| 12 | | √ | Section of service trench |
| 13 | | √ | Service trench |
| 14 | | √ | Section of service trench |
| 15 | | √ | Service trench |
| 16 | | √ | Service trench |
| 17 | √ | √ | Footings trench West |
| 18 | √ | √ | Footings trench section |
| 19 | √ | √ | Footings trench Middle |
| 20 | √ | √ | Footings trench South |
| 21 | √ | √ | Overview of footings trenches |
| 22 | √ | √ | Footings trench South |
| 23 | √ | √ | Footings trench East |

Appendix 3: ASC OASIS Form

| PROJECT DETAILS | | | |
|--|---|--|-------------------------------|
| Project Name: | Watching Brief: Watton-at-Stone Primary School | | |
| Short Description: | During November and December 2007 Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd conducted a watching brief at Watton-At-Stone Primary School during groundworks for an extension to the existing school building. No archaeological features or remains were observed during this watching brief. | | |
| Project Type: (indicate all that apply) | Watching Brief | | |
| Site status: (eg. none, SAM, Listed) | None | Previous work: (eg. SMR refs) | None |
| Current land use: | Educational | Future work: (yes / no / unknown) | No |
| Monument type: | None | Monument period: | None |
| Significant finds: (artefact type & period) | None | | |
| PROJECT LOCATION | | | |
| County: | Hertfordshire | OS reference: (8 figs min) | TL 2997 1912 |
| District: | East Hertfordshire | Parish: | Watton-at-Stone |
| Site address: (with postcode if known) | Watton-at-Stone Primary School, Rectory Lane, Watton-at-Stone, Hertfordshire | | |
| Study area: (sq. m. or ha) | | Height OD: (metres) | |
| PROJECT CREATORS | | | |
| Organisation: | Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd | | |
| Project brief originator: | Hertfordshire CC | Project design originator: | ASC Ltd |
| Project Manager: | Bob Zeepvat | Director/Supervisor: | Jenny Richards |
| Sponsor / funding body: | Mace Ltd | | |
| PROJECT DATE | | | |
| Start date: | 16 th November 2007 | End date: | 5 th December 2007 |
| PROJECT ARCHIVES | | | |
| | Location (Accession no.) | Content (eg. pottery, animal bone, files/sheets) | |
| Physical: | Hertford Museum | None | |
| Paper: | Hertford Museum | Report, B&W photos and negatives | |
| Digital: | Hertford Museum | CD with copies of all digital files | |
| BIBLIOGRAPHY (Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report) | | | |
| Title: | Watching Brief: Watton-at-Stone Primary School | | |
| Serial title & volume: | ASC Ltd client report 996/WAS/2 | | |
| Author(s): | Jenny Richards | | |
| Page nos | 21 | Date: | 7 th January 2008 |

Appendix 4: SMR Summary Sheet

HERTS

| | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Site name and address: Watton-at-Stone Primary School Rectory Lane Watton-at-Stone | | |
| County: HERTFORDSHIRE | | District: East Hertfordshire |
| Village/Town: Watton-at-Stone | | Parish: Watton-at-Stone |
| Planning application reference: | | |
| Client name, address, & tel. no: Hertfordshire County Council C/o Mace Limited Stag House Old London Road Hertford SG13 7YY | | |
| Nature of application: Extension to existing school building | | |
| Present land use: Educational | | |
| Size of application area: n/a | | Size of area investigated: n/a |
| NGR (to 8 figures): TL 2997 1912 | | Site code: 996/WAS |
| Site director/Organization: Bob Zeepvat / ASC Ltd | | |
| Type of work: Watching Brief | | |
| Date of work: | Start: 16 th November 2007 | Finish: 5 th December 2007 |
| Curating museum: Hertford Museum | | |
| Related SMR nos: none | | Periods represented: none |
| Relevant previous summaries/reports | | |
| Summary of fieldwork results: During November and December 2007 Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd conducted a watching brief at Watton-At-Stone Primary School during groundworks for an extension to the existing school building. No archaeological features or remains were observed during this watching brief. | | |
| Author: J Richards | | Date: 7 th January 2008 |