

Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL STRIP & RECORD EXCAVATION:
BRIDGEWATER SCHOOL, BERKHAMSTED,
HERTFORDSHIRE**

on behalf of Mouchel Parkman



Jonathan R. Hunn BA PhD MIFA

April 2007

ASC: 894/BBS/2

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Site Data

<i>ASC site code:</i>	BBS	<i>Project no:</i>	894
<i>County:</i>	Hertfordshire		
<i>Village/Town:</i>	Berkhamsted		
<i>Civil Parish:</i>	Berkhamsted		
<i>NGR (to 8 figs):</i>	SP 9839 0899		
<i>Extent of site:</i>	-		
<i>Present land use:</i>	School campus		
<i>Planning proposal:</i>	Extension to existing school building		
<i>Local Planning Authority:</i>	Dacorum Borough Council		
<i>Planning application ref/date:</i>	Covered by school's permitted development rights		
<i>Client:</i>	Mouchel Parkman Stag House Old London Road Hertford SG13 7YY		
<i>Contact name:</i>	Mr Kevin Liles		

Internal Quality Check

<i>Primary Author:</i>	Jonathan R. Hunn	<i>Date:</i>	April 16 th 2007
<i>Revisions:</i>		<i>Date:</i>	
<i>Edited/Checked By:</i>		<i>Date:</i>	

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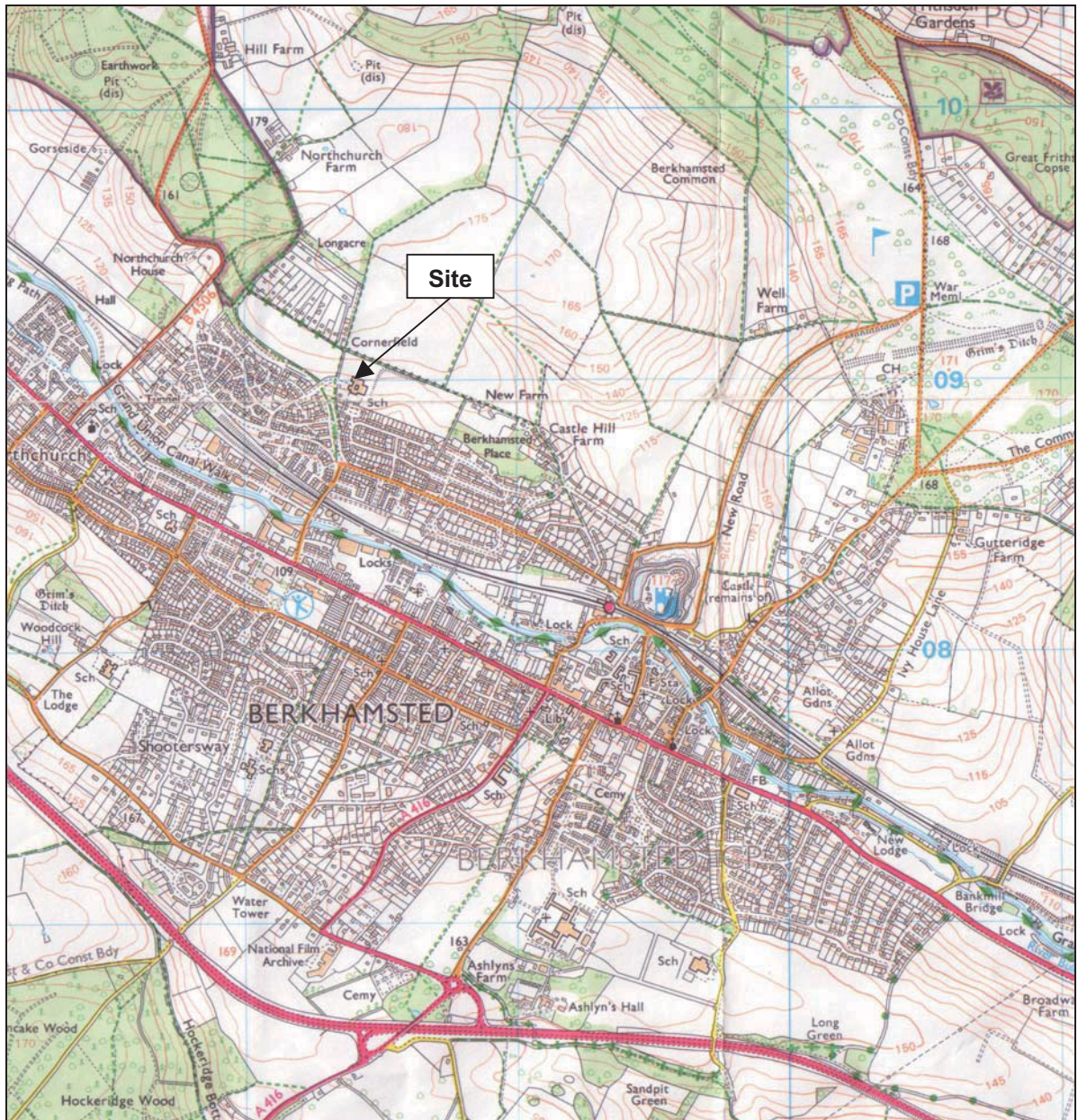


Figure 1: General location (scale 1:25,000)

Summary

In April 2007 Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd undertook a 'strip & record excavation' at the entrance to the main building of Bridgewater School, Berkhamsted in advance of the construction of an extension to the school. At a depth of half a metre the natural 'Clay-with-flints' was exposed. With the exception of service trenches no pre-modern features were observed on the site.

1 Introduction

1.1 In the month of April 2007 *Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd* (ASC) carried out a strip & record excavation at Bridgewater School, Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire (NGR SP 9839 0899: Fig. 1). The project was commissioned by Kevin Liles of Mouchel Parkman, and was carried out according to a project design prepared by ASC (Barclay 2007), and a *brief* (Batt 2007) prepared on behalf of the local planning authority (LPA), *Dacorum Borough Council*, by their archaeological advisor (AA), *Hertfordshire County Council Historic Environment Unit*.

1.2 *Planning Background*

This excavation was required under the terms of *Planning Policy Guidance Note 16* (PPG16), in response to proposals for the construction of a school extension.

1.3 *Location*

The site is in Berkhamsted, in the administrative district of Dacorum, Hertfordshire (Fig. 1). It is on the northern side of the town, just east of the junction of Bridle Way and Haynes Mead, and is centred on Ordnance Survey NGR SP 9839 0899 (Fig. 2).

1.4 *Description*

The area of the excavation lies on the north side of the school building immediately in front of the entrance to the administrative centre of the school. The site is defined by existing buildings to the south and west. On its north side there is a paved pathway while to the east there is a grassed area. There are various service runs in the vicinity.

1.5 *Geology & Topography*

The soils of the area comprise the *Charity 2 Association*: namely flinty fine silty soils over chalk (Soil Survey, 1983). The site is on the north side of the valley of the river Bulbourne, and lies at an elevation of *c.* 155m OD.

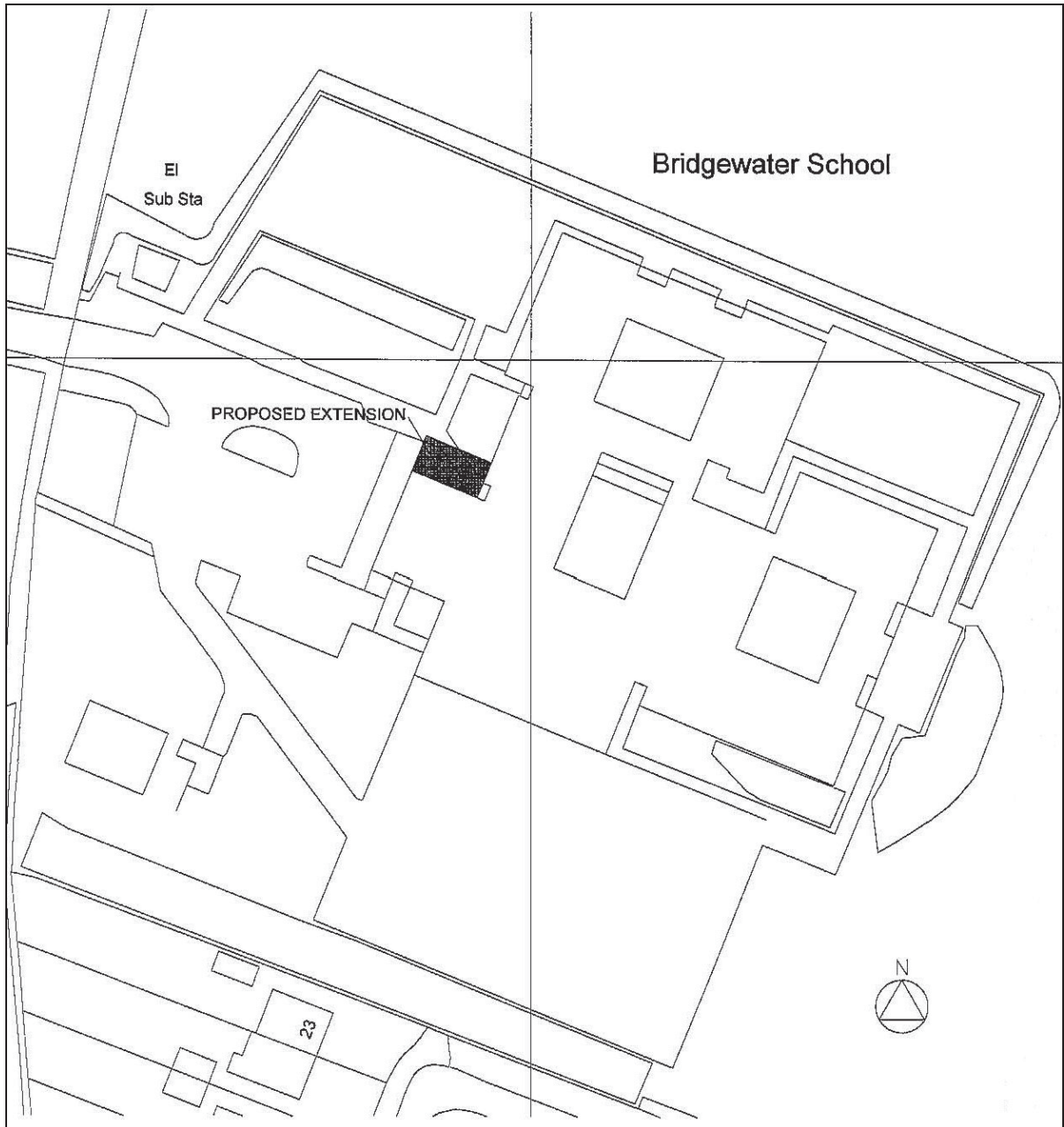


Figure 2: Site plan (scale 1:500)

2 Aims & Methods

2.1 Aims

In line with the requirements of the *brief* (Section 1), the aims of the strip and record were as follows:

- 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 requirements of the *brief*, to the relevant sections of the Institute of Archaeologists' *Standard & Guidance Notes* (IFA 2001) and *Code of Conduct* (IFA 2000a), to the Association of Local Government Archaeological Officers East of England Region *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England* (ALGAO 2003), to current English Heritage guidelines (EH1991), and to the relevant sections of ASC's own *Operations Manual*.

2.3 Methods

In line with the requirements of the *brief* (Section 3), the methods to be adopted for this project were as follows:

- Soil and overburden stripping under archaeological supervision
- Inspection of sub-soil deposits for archaeological features
- Rapid investigation and recording of any features/deposits
- Sub-soil stripping under archaeological supervision followed by rapid investigation and recording
- Examination of any service and foundation trenches and recording and any exposed archaeological deposits
- Examination of spoil-heaps for archaeological material

2.4 Constraints

Due to the presence of a service trench, a BT and fibre optic cable and disturbed ground immediately adjacent to the school foundations the full extent of the 'strip and record' area was partially reduced.

3 Archaeological & Historical Background

HER = Historic Environment Record

- 3.1 Berkhamsted is an area of considerable archaeological and historical importance (Birtchnell 1960; HCC 2004; Page (ed), 1908) and this has been recognised by *Hertfordshire County Council* by the designation of much of the town as an *Area of Archaeological Importance*. The site has the potential to reveal evidence of a variety of periods, but the focus of interest is likely to lie in the Iron Age and Roman periods, with the further possibility of some medieval finds.
- 3.2 The present town of Berkhamsted developed in the valley bottom along the line of a Roman road, now known as *Akeman Street*, which linked the Roman settlement of *Verulamium* (St Albans) with *Corinium Dobunorum* (Cirencester). The site is away from the main area of Roman and medieval settlement, but remains of the Iron Age and Roman period are known along Castle Hill Avenue and Bridgewater Road, close to the site.
- 3.3 A significant site lay to the south-west of the site near the railway line (HER 6437). The site has evidence for Iron Age/Roman industrial activity, including four shaft furnaces (HER 4904: Thompson & Holland 1977). Burials have also been recorded at the site. Evidence for pottery kilns has been recorded at the east end of Bridgewater Road (HER 6803) and also further along Bridgewater Road, south-east of the site (HER 6071). The remaining evidence all comprises isolated finds. For example, several Roman coins were found at the castle (HER 1336), and from Dellfield south-west of the site (HER 6076).
- 3.4 The site formed part of the local iron smelting industry in the 1st century, pre-dating the Roman conquest of AD 43. It is certainly of regional importance and there is a good case, as things stand at present, for arguing that the site is of national importance. The site was excavated by the local archaeological society (BDAS) in less than ideal conditions in the early 1970s with minimal resources (Thompson & Holland 1977). An emergency excavation in 2004 revealed few archaeological features, although some pottery was recovered consisting of mostly Iron Age pottery with some Roman sherds (Hunn & Thompson 2004).
- 3.5 Berkhamsted was of considerable importance during the medieval period, notably due to the presence of the castle and medieval settlement on the south side of the river (HCC 2004). The site is west of the castle, but also offers limited potential for the discovery of medieval remains.
- 3.6 The site lies beyond the extent of the medieval and early medieval town, and probably remained open ground until the mid-20th century. The 1897 Ordnance Survey map shows the site as part of an irregular-shaped field west of a substantial building and estate known as Berkhamstead Place.

4 Results

- 4.1 About 70% of the original proposed area (9m x 5m) was stripped of its overburden. This material consisted of topsoil and a disturbed matrix of building debris, soil and spreads of cement. Beneath this, at a depth of about 0.5m was the undisturbed pebbly clay. Apart from a modern service trench running east-west there were no features identified. No pre-modern artefacts were observed during the course of the work.

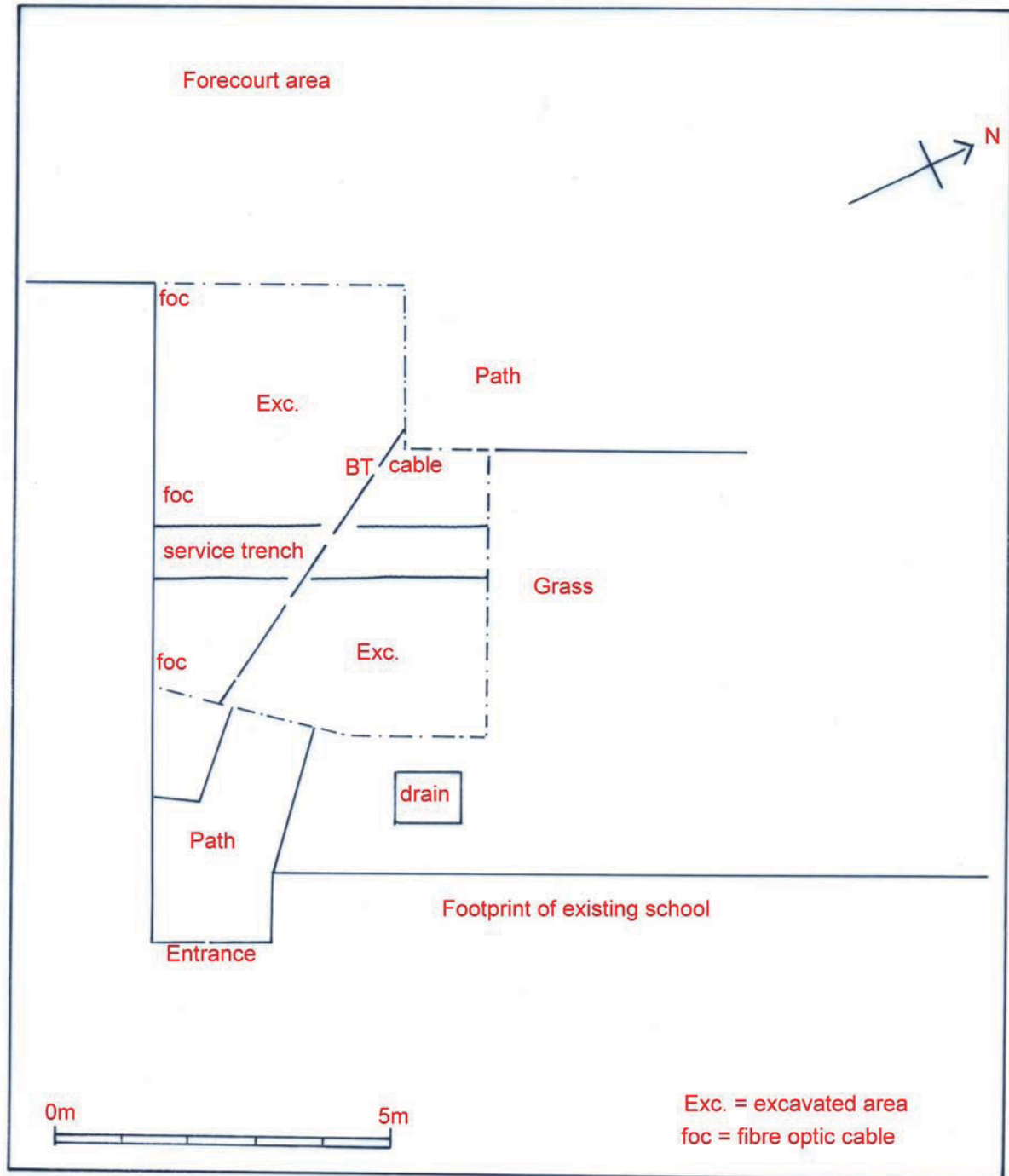


Figure 3: Plan showing the extent of the excavation area



Plate 1: View looking west before work commenced on site



Plate 2: Western side of exposed area looking northwards



Plate 3: Detail of the western side of the area



Plate 4: Area cleared of overburden looking north

5. Conclusions

- 5.1 The site at Bridgewater School was excavated by the local archaeological society (BDAS) in less than ideal conditions in the early 1970s with minimal resources. Since then techniques have progressed and there is a greater potential to obtain more detailed information on the site and its immediate locality where deposits remain undisturbed.
- 5.2 It is possible that the previous development of the school would have destroyed any archaeological features present. Due to the unfavourable conditions under which BDAS undertook the excavations, any surviving remains may not have been detected. Similarly, no archaeological features were observed during the current archaeological work.
- 5.3 No discarded artefacts were observed amongst the excavated soil which, to judge from its varied composition, was imported into the site as part of the landscaping operation after the completion of the existing school buildings.
- 5.4 The site lay within about 15m of a 1.8m bank that was created by the cutting down of the ground to create a terraced area on which the main school block stands.
- 5.5 No significant archaeological remains were identified in the area. While the occasional survival of individual isolated archaeological features, away from the excavation area, cannot be entirely excluded, archaeological features and artefacts were not observed on the site.

6. Acknowledgements

The writer is grateful to Kevin Liles of Mouchel Parkman for commissioning this report. Thanks are due to Stewart Sibbery of Bald Track Construction for his co-operation and to Mill Hill Plant Hire for supplying the machinery. Thanks to Kate Batt of the Historical Environment Section of Herts County Council for her usual pragmatic approach. Finally my thanks to my colleague Bob Zeepvat BA MIFA for editing this report.

7. Archive

7.1 The project archive will comprise:

1. Brief
2. Project Design
3. Clients site plans
4. Site records
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 the Dacorum Heritage Trust.

8. References

Standards & Specifications

- ALGAO 2003 *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England*. East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Paper 14.
- Allen J L & Holt A St J, 1986 (with later updates) *Health & Safety in Field Archaeology*. Standing Conference of Unit Managers (London).
- Batt K 2007 *Design Brief for Archaeological Monitoring and Recording (Strip & Record)* Herts County Council
- EH 1991 *The Management of Archaeological Projects*, 2nd edition. English Heritage (London).
- EH 2002 *Environmental Archaeology: A Guide to the Theory and Practice of Methods, from Sampling and Recovery to Post-Excavation*. English Heritage (London).
- Ferguson L.M. & Murray D.M. 1997 *Archaeological Documentary Archives: Preparation, Curation and Storage*. Institute of Field Archaeologists' Paper 1 (Manchester).
- 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)*.
- McKinley J.I. & Roberts C. 1993 *Excavation and Post-Excavation Treatment of Cremated and Inhumed Human Remains*. Institute of Field Archaeologists Technical Paper 13.
- MGC 1992 *Standards in the Museum Care of Archaeological Collections*. Museums and Galleries Commission (London).
- SMA 1995 *Towards an accessible archaeological archive - the transfer of archaeological archives to museums: guidelines for use in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales*. Society for Museum Archaeologists (London).
- Walker, K. 1990: *Guidelines for the preparation of excavation archives for long-term storage*. United Kingdom Institute for Conservation, Archaeology Section (London).
- Watkinson D & Neal V 1998 *First Aid for Finds* (third edition). Rescue (Hertford & London).

Secondary Sources

- Birtchnell P C., 1960 *A Short History of Berkhamsted*. Clunbury Press
- HCC 2004 *Berkhamsted: Extensive Urban Survey Project Assessment*. Hertfordshire County Council
- Hunn J R & Thompson A 2004 *Archaeological Salvage recording: Bridgewater School, Billet Lane, Berkhamsted* ASC Ltd
- Page W, 1908 *The Victoria History of the County of Berkhamsted*. Dawsons of Pall Mall
- Soil Survey 1983 *1:250,000 Soil Map of England and Wales, and accompanying legend* (Harpenden).
- Thompson A & Holland E 1977 'Excavation of an Iron Age Site at Dellfield, Berkhamsted' *Hertfordshire Archaeology* 4 pp137-148

Appendix 1: List of Photographs

SITE NAME: Bridgewater School, Berkhamsted				SITE NO/CODE: 894/BBS
Shot	B&W	Slide	Digital	Subject
1			0776	View west before work commenced on site. Plate 1
2			0777	Beginning of work on site view west
3			0778	Detail of machinery looking northwards
4			0779	Work underway looking west
5			0780	Western side of machined area looking northwards Plate 2
6			0781	Detail of ditto Plate 3
7			0782	Area cleared of overburden looking north Plate 4
8			0783	Detail of ditto – NB service trench in foreground
9			0784	Location of the trench looking south
10			0785	Setting of excavation
11	1			General view of machined area looking NW
12	2			General locational shot looking south

Appendix 2: ASC OASIS Form

PROJECT DETAILS			
Project Name:	Bridgewater School, Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire		
Short Description:	<i>In April 2007 Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd undertook a 'strip & record excavation' at the entrance to the main building of Bridgewater School, Berkhamsted in advance of the construction of an extension to the school. At a depth of half a metre the natural 'Clay-with-flints' was exposed. Apart from service trenches no pre-modern features were observed on the site.</i>		
Project Type:	Strip&Rec		
Site status: (eg. none, SAM, Listed)	AAA	Previous work: (eg. SMR refs)	Hunn & Thompson 2004
Current land use:	School grounds	Future work:	unknown
Monument type:	none	Monument period:	none
Significant finds: (artefact type & period)	none		
PROJECT LOCATION			
County:	Hertfordshire	OS reference: (to at least 8 figures)	SP 9839 0899
Site address: (with postcode if known)	Bridgewater School, Billet Lane, Berkhamsted, Herts		
Study area: (sq. m. or ha)	9m x 5m	Height OD: (metres)	155m
PROJECT CREATORS			
Organisation:	Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd		
Project brief originator:	Kate Batt	Project design originator:	C. Barclay
Project Manager:	D. Fell	Director/Supervisor:	J.R. Hunn
Sponsor / funding body:	Herts C.C.		
PROJECT DATE			
Start date:	10/4/07	End date:	10/4/07
PROJECT ARCHIVES			
	Location (Accession no.)	Content (eg. pottery, animal bone, files/sheets)	
Physical:	none	none	
Paper:	none	none	
Digital:	Digital only		
BIBLIOGRAPHY (Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report)			
Title:	Archaeological Strip & Record Excavation: Bridgewater School, Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire		
Serial title & volume:	ASC report 894/BBS/2		
Author(s):	Jonathan R Hunn		
Page nos	N/a	Date:	16/4/07

Appendix 3: SMR Summary Sheet

Site name and address: Bridgewater School, Billet Lane, Berkhamsted		
County: Herts		District: Dacorum
Village/Town: Berkhamsted		Parish: St Peters
Planning application reference: permitted development		
Client name, address, & tel. no: Mouchel Parkman Stag House Old London Road Hertford SG13 7YY		
Nature of application: building extension		
Present land use: school grounds		
Size of application area: n/a		Size of area investigated: 9m x 5m
NGR (to 8 figures): SP 9839 0899		Site code: 894/BBS
Site director/Organization: J. R. Hunn/ ASC Ltd		
Type of work: Building survey / strip & record excavation		
Date of work:	Start: 10/04/07	Finish: 10/04/07
Curating museum: Dacorum Heritage Trust		
Related SMR nos: tba		Periods represented: none
Relevant previous summaries/reports Hunn 2004		
<p>Summary of fieldwork results:</p> <p><i>In April 2007 Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd undertook a 'strip & record excavation' at the entrance to the main building of Bridgewater School, Berkhamsted in advance of the construction of an extension to the school. At a depth of half a metre the natural 'Clay-with-flints' was exposed. Apart from service trenches no pre-modern features were observed on the site.</i></p>		
Author: J.R. Hunn		Date: April 16 th 2007